

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

GILMORE'S NARRATIVE CONCLUDED.

III.

A WEEK passed, after my return to London, without the receipt of any communication from Miss Halcombe.

On the eighth day, a letter in her handwriting was placed among the other letters on my desk.

It announced that Sir Percival Glyde had been definitely accepted, and that the marriage was to take place, as he had originally desired, before the end of the year. In all probability the ceremony would be performed during the last fortnight in December. Miss Fairlie's twenty-first birthday was late in March. She would, therefore, by this arrangement, become Sir Percival's wife about three months before she was of age.

I ought not to have been surprised, I ought not to have been sorry; but I was surprised and sorry, nevertheless. Some little disappointment, caused by the unsatisfactory shortness of Miss Halcombe's letter, mingled itself with these feelings, and contributed its share towards upsetting my serenity for the day. In six lines my correspondent announced the proposed marriage; in three more, she told me that Sir Percival had left Cumberland to return to his house in Hampshire; and in two concluding sentences she informed me, first, that Laura was sadly in want of change and cheerful society; secondly, that she had resolved to try the effect of some such change forthwith, by taking her sister away with her on a visit to certain old friends in Yorkshire. There the letter ended, without a word to explain what the circumstances were which had decided Miss Fairlie to accept Sir Percival Glyde in one short week from the time when I had last seen her.

At a later period, the cause of this sudden determination was fully explained to me. It is not my business to relate it imperfectly, on hearsay evidence. The circumstances came within the personal experience of Miss Halcombe; and, when her narrative succeeds mine, she will describe them in every particular, exactly as they happened. In the mean time, the plain duty for me to perform—before I, in my turn, lay down my pen and withdraw from the story

—is to relate the one remaining event connected with Miss Fairlie's proposed marriage in which I was concerned, namely, the drawing of the settlement.

It is impossible to refer intelligibly to this document, without first entering into certain particulars, in relation to the bride's pecuniary affairs. I will try to make my explanation briefly and plainly, and to keep it free from professional obscurities and technicalities. The matter is of the utmost importance. I warn all readers of these lines that Miss Fairlie's inheritance is a very serious part of Miss Fairlie's story; and that Mr. Gilmore's experience, in this particular, must be their experience also; if they wish to understand the narratives which are yet to come.

Miss Fairlie's expectations, then, were of a twofold kind; comprising her possible inheritance of real property, or land, when her uncle died, and her absolute inheritance of personal property, or money, when she came of age.

Let us take the land first.

In the time of Miss Fairlie's paternal grandfather (whom we will call Mr. Fairlie, the elder) the entailed succession to the Limmeridge estate stood thus:

Mr. Fairlie, the elder, died and left three sons, Philip, Frederick, and Arthur. As eldest son, Philip succeeded to the estate. If he died without leaving a son, the property went to the second brother, Frederick. And if Frederick died also without leaving a son, the property went to the third brother, Arthur.

As events turned out, Mr. Philip Fairlie died leaving an only daughter, the Laura of this story; and the estate, in consequence, went, in course of law, to the second brother, Frederick, a single man. The third brother, Arthur, had died many years before the decease of Philip, leaving a son and a daughter. The son, at the age of eighteen, was drowned at Oxford. His death left Laura, the daughter of Mr. Philip Fairlie, presumptive heiress to the estate; with every chance of succeeding to it, in the ordinary course of nature, on her uncle Frederick's death, if the said Frederick died without leaving male issue.

Except in the event, then, of Mr. Frederick Fairlie's marrying and leaving an heir (the two very last things in the world that he was likely to do), his niece, Laura, would have the property on his death; possessing, it must be remembered,

nothing more than a life-interest in it. If she died single, or died childless, the estate would revert to her cousin Magdalen, the daughter of Mr. Arthur Fairlie. If she married, with a proper settlement—or, in other words, with the settlement I meant to make for her—the income from the estate (a good three thousand a year) would, during her lifetime, be at her own disposal. If she died before her husband, he would naturally expect to be left in the enjoyment of the income, for *his* lifetime. If she had a son, that son would be the heir, to the exclusion of her cousin Magdalen. Thus, Sir Percival's prospects in marrying Miss Fairlie (so far as his wife's expectations from real property were concerned) promised him these two advantages, on Mr. Frederick Fairlie's death: First, the use of three thousand a year (by his wife's permission, while she lived, and in his own right, on her death, if he survived her); and, secondly, the inheritance of Limmeridge for his son, if he had one.

So much for the landed property, and for the disposal of the income from it, on the occasion of Miss Fairlie's marriage. Thus far, no difficulty or difference of opinion on the lady's settlement was at all likely to arise between Sir Percival's lawyer and myself.

The personal estate, or, in other words, the money to which Miss Fairlie would become entitled on reaching the age of twenty-one years, is the next point to consider.

This part of her inheritance was, in itself, a comfortable little fortune. It was derived under her father's will, and it amounted to the sum of twenty thousand pounds. Besides this, she had a life-interest in ten thousand pounds more; which latter amount was to go, on her decease, to her aunt Eleanor, her father's only sister. It will greatly assist in setting the family affairs before the reader in the clearest possible light, if I stop here for a moment, to explain why the aunt had been kept waiting for her legacy until the death of the niece.

Mr. Philip Fairlie had lived on excellent terms with his sister Eleanor, as long as she remained a single woman. But when her marriage took place, somewhat late in life, and when that marriage united her to an Italian gentleman, named Fosco—or, rather, to an Italian nobleman, seeing that he rejoiced in the title of Count—Mr. Fairlie disapproved of her conduct so strongly that he ceased to hold any communication with her, and even went the length of striking her name out of his will. The other members of the family all thought this serious manifestation of resentment at his sister's marriage more or less unreasonable. Count Fosco, though not a rich man, was not a penniless adventurer either. He had a small, but sufficient income of his own; he had lived many years in England; and he held an excellent position in society. These recommendations, however, availed nothing with Mr. Fairlie. In many of his opinions he was an Englishman of the old school; and he hated a foreigner, simply and solely because he was a foreigner. The utmost that he could

be prevailed on to do, in after years, mainly at Miss Fairlie's intercession, was to restore his sister's name to its former place in his will, but to keep her waiting for her legacy by giving the income of the money to his daughter for life, and the money itself, if her aunt died before her, to her cousin Magdalen. Considering the relative ages of the two ladies, the aunt's chance, in the ordinary course of nature, of receiving the ten thousand pounds, was thus rendered doubtful in the extreme; and Madame Fosco resented her brother's treatment of her, as unjustly as usual in such cases, by refusing to see her niece, and declining to believe that Miss Fairlie's intercession had ever been exerted to restore her name to Mr. Fairlie's will.

Such was the history of the ten thousand pounds. Here again no difficulty could arise with Sir Percival's legal adviser. The income would be at the wife's disposal, and the principal would go to her aunt, or her cousin, on her death.

All preliminary explanations being now cleared out of the way, I come, at last, to the real knot of the case—to the twenty thousand pounds.

This sum was absolutely Miss Fairlie's own, on her completing her twenty-first year; and the whole future disposition of it depended, in the first instance, on the conditions I could obtain for her in her marriage-settlement. The other clauses contained in that document were of a formal kind, and need not be recited here. But the clause relating to the money is too important to be passed over. A few lines will be sufficient to give the necessary abstract of it.

My stipulation, in regard to the twenty thousand pounds, was simply this: The whole amount was to be settled so as to give the income to the lady for her life; afterwards to Sir Percival for his life; and the principal to the children of the marriage. In default of issue, the principal was to be disposed of as the lady might by her will direct, for which purpose I reserved to her the right of making a will. The effect of these conditions may be thus summed up. If Lady Glyde died without leaving children, her half-sister, Miss Halcombe, and any other relatives or friends whom she might be anxious to benefit, would, on her husband's death, divide among them such shares of her money as she desired them to have. If, on the other hand, she died, leaving children, then their interest, naturally and necessarily, superseded all other interests whatsoever. This was the clause; and no one who reads it, can fail, I think, to agree with me that it meted out equal justice to all parties.

We shall see how my proposals were met on the husband's side.

At the time when Miss Halcombe's letter reached me, I was even more busily occupied than usual. But I contrived to make leisure for the settlement. I had drawn it, and had sent it for approval to Sir Percival's solicitor, in less than a week from the time when Miss Halcombe had informed me of the proposed marriage.

After a lapse of two days, the document was returned to me, with the notes and remarks of the baronet's lawyer. His objections, in general, proved to be of the most trifling and technical kind, until he came to the clause relating to the twenty thousand pounds. Against this, there were double lines drawn in red ink, and the following note was appended to them:

"Not admissible. The *principal* to go to Sir Percival Glyde, in the event of his surviving Lady Glyde, and there being no issue."

That is to say, not one farthing of the twenty thousand pounds was to go to Miss Halcombe, or to any other relative or friend of Lady Glyde's. The whole sum, if she left no children, was to slip into the pockets of her husband.

The answer I wrote to this audacious proposal was as short and sharp as I could make it.

"My dear sir. I maintain clause number so-and-so, exactly as it stands. Yours truly."

The rejoinder came back in a quarter of an hour.

"My dear sir. I maintain the note in red ink exactly as it stands. Yours truly." In the detestable slang of the day, we were now both "at a dead-lock," and nothing was left for it but to refer to our clients on either side.

As matters stood, my client—Miss Fairlie not having yet completed her twenty-first year—was her guardian, Mr. Frederick Fairlie. I wrote by that day's post, and put the case before him exactly as it stood; not only urging every argument I could think of to induce him to maintain the clause as I had drawn it, but stating to him plainly the mercenary motive which was at the bottom of the opposition to my settlement of the twenty thousand pounds. The knowledge of Sir Percival's affairs which I necessarily gained when the provisions of the deed on *his* side were submitted in due course to my examination, had but too plainly informed me that the debts on his estate were enormous, and that his income, though nominally a large one, was, virtually, for a man in his position, next to nothing. The want of ready money was the practical necessity of Sir Percival's existence; and his lawyer's note on the clause in the settlement was nothing but the frankly selfish expression of it.

Mr. Fairlie's answer reached me by return of post, and proved to be wandering and irrelevant in the extreme. Turned into plain English, it practically expressed itself to this effect: "Would dear Gilmore be so very obliging as not to worry his friend and client about such a trifle as a remote contingency? Was it likely that a young woman of twenty-one would die before a man of forty-five, and die without children? On the other hand, in such a miserable world as this, was it possible to over-estimate the value of peace and quietness? If those two heavenly blessings were offered in exchange for such an earthly trifle as a remote chance of twenty thousand pounds, was it not a fair bargain? Surely, yes. Then why not make it?"

I threw the letter away from me in disgust. Just as it had fluttered to the ground, there

was a knock at my door; and Sir Percival's solicitor, Mr. Merriman, was shown in. There are many varieties of sharp practitioners in this world, but, I think, the hardest of all to deal with are the men who overreach you under the disguise of inveterate good humour. A fat, well-fed, smiling, friendly man of business is of all parties to a bargain the most hopeless to deal with. Mr. Merriman was one of this class.

"And how is good Mr. Gilmore?" he began, all in a glow with the warmth of his own amiability. "Glad to see you, sir, in such excellent health. I was passing your door; and I thought I would look in, in case you might have something to say to me. Do—now pray do let us settle this little difference of ours by word of mouth, if we can! Have you heard from your client yet?"

"Yes. Have you heard from yours?"

"My dear, good sir! I wish I had heard from him to any purpose—I wish, with all my heart, the responsibility was off my shoulders; but he won't take it off. 'Merriman, I leave details to you. Do what you think right for my interests; and consider me as having personally withdrawn from the business until it is all over.' Those were Sir Percival's words a fortnight ago; and all I can get him to do now is to repeat them. I am not a hard man, Mr. Gilmore, as you know. Personally and privately, I do assure you, I should like to sponge out that note of mine at this very moment. But if Sir Percival won't go into the matter, if Sir Percival will blindly leave all his interests in my sole care, what course can I possibly take except the course of asserting them? My hands are bound—don't you see, my dear sir?—my hands are bound."

"You maintain your note on the clause, then, to the letter?" I said.

"Yes—deuce take it! I have no other alternative." He walked to the fireplace, and warmed himself, humming the *fag end* of a tune in a rich, convivial bass voice. "What does your side say?" he went on; "now pray tell me—what does your side say?"

I was ashamed to tell him. I attempted to gain time—*nay*, I did worse. My legal instincts got the better of me; and I even tried to bargain.

"Twenty thousand pounds is rather a large sum to be given up by the lady's friends at two days' notice," I said.

"Very true," replied Mr. Merriman, looking down thoughtfully at his boots. "Properly put, sir—most properly put!"

"A compromise, recognising the interests of the lady's family as well as the interests of the husband might not, perhaps, have frightened my client quite so much," I went on. "Come! come! this contingency resolves itself into a matter of bargaining after all. What is the least you will take?"

"The least we will take," said Mr. Merriman, "is nineteen-thousand-nine-hundred-and-nineteen - pounds - nineteen - shillings - and - eleven-

pence-three-farthings. Ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, Mr. Gilmore. I must have my little joke."

"Little enough!" I remarked. "The joke is just worth the odd farthing it was made for."

Mr. Merriman was delighted. He laughed over my retort till the room rang again. I was not half so good-humoured, on my side: I came back to business, and closed the interview.

"This is Friday," I said. "Give us till Tuesday next for our final answer."

"By all means," replied Mr. Merriman. "Longer, my dear sir, if you like." He took up his hat to go; and then addressed me again. "By the way," he said, "your clients in Cumberland have not heard anything more of the woman who wrote the anonymous letter, have they?"

"Nothing more," I answered. "Have you found no trace of her?"

"Not yet," said my legal friend. "But we don't despair. Sir Percival has his suspicions that Somebody is keeping her in hiding; and we are having that Somebody watched."

"You mean the old woman who was with her in Cumberland?" I said.

"Quite another party, sir," answered Mr. Merriman. "We don't happen to have laid hands on the old woman yet. Our Somebody is a man. We have got him close under our eye here in London; and we strongly suspect he had something to do with helping her in the first instance to escape from the Asylum. Sir Percival wanted to question him, at once; but I said, 'No. Questioning him will only put him on his guard: watch him, and wait.' We shall see what happens. A dangerous woman to be at large, Mr. Gilmore; nobody knows what she may do next. I wish you good morning, sir. On Tuesday next I shall hope for the pleasure of hearing from you." He smiled amiably, and went out.

My mind had been rather absent during the latter part of the conversation with my legal friend. I was so anxious about the matter of the settlement, that I had little attention to give to any other subject; and, the moment I was left alone again, I began to think over what my next proceeding ought to be.

In the case of any other client, I should have acted on my instructions, however personally distasteful to me, and have given up the point about the twenty thousand pounds on the spot. But I could not act with this business-like indifference towards Miss Fairlie. I had an honest feeling of affection and admiration for her; I remembered gratefully that her father had been the kindest patron and friend to me that ever man had; I had felt towards her, while I was drawing the settlement, as I might have felt, if I had not been an old bachelor, towards a daughter of my own; and I was determined to spare no personal sacrifice in her service and where her interests were concerned. Writing a second time to Mr. Fairlie was not to be thought of; it would only be giving him a second opportunity of slipping through my fingers. Seeing

him and personally remonstrating with him, might possibly be of more use. The next day was Saturday. I determined to take a return ticket, and jolt my old bones down to Cumberland, on the chance of persuading him to adopt the just, the independent, and the honourable course. It was a poor chance enough, no doubt; but, when I had tried it, my conscience would be at ease. I should then have done all that a man in my position could do to serve the interests of my old friend's only child.

The weather on Saturday was beautiful, a west wind and a bright sun. Having felt latterly a return of that fulness and oppression of the head, against which my doctor warned me so seriously more than two years since, I resolved to take the opportunity of getting a little extra exercise, by sending my bag on before me, and walking to the terminus in Euston-square. As I came out into Holborn, a gentleman, walking by rapidly, stopped and spoke to me. It was Mr. Walter Hartright.

If he had not been the first to greet me, I should certainly have passed him. He was so changed that I hardly knew him again. His face looked pale and haggard—his manner was hurried and uncertain—and his dress, which I remembered as neat and gentlemanlike when I saw him at Limmeridge, was so slovenly, now, that I should really have been ashamed of the appearance of it on one of my own clerks.

"Have you been long back from Cumberland?" he asked. "I heard from Miss Halcombe lately. I am aware that Sir Percival Glyde's explanation has been considered satisfactory. Will the marriage take place soon? Do you happen to know, Mr. Gilmore?"

He spoke so fast, and crowded his questions together so strangely and confusedly, that I could hardly follow him. However accidentally intimate he might have been with the family at Limmeridge, I could not see that he had any right to expect information on their private affairs; and I determined to drop him, as easily as might be, on the subject of Miss Fairlie's marriage.

"Time will show," Mr. Hartright, I said—"time will show. I dare say if we look out for the marriage in the papers we shall not be far wrong. Excuse my noticing it—but I am sorry to see you not looking so well as you were when we last met."

A momentary nervous contraction quivered about his lips and eyes, and made me half reproach myself for having answered him in such a significantly guarded manner.

"I had no right to ask about her marriage," he said, bitterly. "I must wait to see it in the newspapers like other people. Yes," he went on, before I could make any apologies, "I have not been well lately. I want a change of scene and occupation. You have a large circle of acquaintance, Mr. Gilmore. If you should hear of any expedition abroad which may be in want of a draughtsman, and if you have no friend of your own who can take advantage of the opportunity,

I should feel greatly obliged by your letting me know of it. I can answer for my testimonials being satisfactory; and I don't care where I go, what the climate is, or how long I am away." He looked about him, while he said this, at the throng of strangers passing us by on either side, in a strange, suspicious manner, as if he thought that some of them might be watching us.

"If I hear of anything of the kind I will not fail to mention it," I said; and then added, so as not to keep him altogether at arm's length on the subject of the Fairlies, "I am going down to Limmeridge, to-day, on business. Miss Halcombe and Miss Fairlie are away, just now, on a visit to some friends in Yorkshire."

His eyes brightened, and he seemed about to say something in answer; but the same momentary nervous spasm crossed his face again. He took my hand, pressed it hard, and disappeared among the crowd, without saying another word. Though he was little more than a stranger to me, I waited for a moment, looking after him almost with a feeling of regret. I had gained, in my profession, sufficient experience of young men, to know what the outward signs and tokens were of their beginning to go wrong; and, when I resumed my walk to the railway, I am sorry to say I felt more than doubtful about Mr. Hartright's future.

IV.

LEAVING by an early train, I got to Limmeridge in time for dinner. The house was oppressively empty and dull. I had expected that good Mrs. Vesey would have been company for me in the absence of the young ladies; but she was confined to her room by a cold. The servants were so surprised at seeing me that they hurried and bustled absurdly, and made all sorts of annoying mistakes. Even the butler, who was old enough to have known better, brought me a bottle of port that was chilled. The reports of Mr. Fairlie's health were just as usual; and when I sent up a message to announce my arrival, I was told that he would be delighted to see me the next morning, but that the sudden news of my appearance had prostrated him with palpitations for the rest of the evening. The wind howled dismally, all night, and strange cracking and groaning noises sounded here, there, and everywhere in the empty house. I slept as wretchedly as possible; and got up, in a mighty bad humour, to breakfast by myself the next morning.

At ten o'clock I was conducted to Mr. Fairlie's apartments. He was in his usual room, his usual chair, and his usual aggravating state of mind and body. When I went in, his valet was standing before him, holding up for inspection a heavy volume of etchings, as long and as broad as my office writing-desk. The miserable foreigner grinned in the most abject manner, and looked ready to drop with fatigue, while his master composedly turned over the etchings, and brought their hidden beauties to light with the help of a magnifying glass.

"You very best of good old friends," said Mr. Fairlie, leaning back lazily before he could look at me, "are you *quite* well? How nice of you to come here and see me in my solitude. Dear Gilmore!"

I had expected that the valet would be dismissed when I appeared; but nothing of the sort happened. There he stood, in front of his master's chair, trembling under the weight of the etchings; and there Mr. Fairlie sat, serenely twirling the magnifying glass between his white fingers and thumbs.

"I have come to speak to you on a very important matter," I said; "and you will therefore excuse me, if I suggest that we had better be alone."

The unfortunate valet looked at me gratefully. Mr. Fairlie faintly repeated my last three words, "better be alone," with every appearance of the utmost possible astonishment.

I was in no humour for trifling; and I resolved to make him understand what I meant.

"Oblige me by giving that man permission to withdraw," I said, pointing to the valet.

Mr. Fairlie arched his eyebrows, and pursed up his lips, in sarcastic surprise.

"Man?" he repeated. "You provoking old Gilmore, what can you possibly mean by calling him a man? He's nothing of the sort. He might have been a man half an hour ago, before I wanted my etchings; and he may be a man half an hour hence, when I don't want them any longer. At present, he is simply a portfolio stand. Why object, Gilmore, to a portfolio stand?"

"I *do* object. For the third time, Mr. Fairlie, I beg that we may be alone."

My tone and manner left him no alternative but to comply with my request. He looked at the servant, and pointed peevishly to a chair at his side.

"Put down the etchings and go away," he said. "Don't upset me by losing my place. Have you, or have you not, lost my place? Are you sure you have not? And have you put my hand-bell quite within my reach? Yes? Then, why the devil don't you go?"

The valet went out. Mr. Fairlie twisted himself round in his chair, polished the magnifying glass with his delicate cambric handkerchief, and indulged himself in a sidelong inspection of the open volume of etchings. It was not easy to keep my temper, under these circumstances; but I did keep it.

"I have come here at great personal inconvenience," I said, "to serve the interests of your niece and your family; and I think I have established some slight claim to be favoured with your attention, in return."

"Don't bully me!" exclaimed Mr. Fairlie, falling back helplessly in the chair, and closing his eyes. "Please don't bully me. I'm not strong enough."

I was determined not to let him provoke me, for Laura Fairlie's sake.

"My object," I went on, "is to entreat you to reconsider your letter, and not to force me to

abandon the just rights of your niece, and of all who belong to her. Let me state the case to you once more, and for the last time."

Mr. Fairlie shook his head, and sighed piteously.

"This is heartless of you, Gilmore—very heartless," he said. "Never mind; go on."

I put all the points to him carefully; I set the matter before him in every conceivable light. He lay back in the chair, the whole time I was speaking, with his eyes closed. When I had done, he opened them indolently, took his silver smelling-bottle from the table, and sniffed at it with an air of gentle relish.

"Good Gilmore!" he said, between the sniffs, "how very nice this is of you! How you reconcile one to human nature!"

"Give me a plain answer to a plain question, Mr. Fairlie. I tell you again, Sir Percival Glyde has no shadow of a claim to expect more than the income of the money. The money itself, if your niece has no children, ought to be under her control, and to return to her family. If you stand firm, Sir Percival must give way—he must give way, I tell you, or he exposes himself to the base imputation of marrying Miss Fairlie entirely from mercenary motives."

Mr. Fairlie shook the silver smelling-bottle at me playfully.

"You dear old Gilmore; how you do hate rank and family, don't you? How you detest Glyde, because he happens to be a baronet. What a Radical you are—oh, dear me, what a Radical you are!"

A Radical!!! I could put up with a great deal of provocation, but, after holding the soundest Conservative principles all my life, I could *not* put up with being called a Radical. My blood boiled at it—I started out of my chair—I was speechless with indignation.

"Don't shake the room!" cried Mr. Fairlie—"for Heaven's sake, don't shake the room! Worthiest of all possible Gilmores, I meant no offence. My own views are so extremely liberal that I think I am a Radical myself. Yes. We are a pair of Radicals. Please don't be angry. I can't quarrel—I haven't stamina enough. Shall we drop the subject? Yes. Come and look at these sweet etchings. Do let me teach you to understand the heavenly pearliness of these lines. Do, now, there's a good Gilmore!"

While he was maundering on in this way, I was, fortunately for my own self-respect, returning to my senses. When I spoke again, I was composed enough to treat his impertinence with the silent contempt that it deserved.

"You are entirely wrong, sir," I said, "in supposing that I speak from any prejudice against Sir Percival Glyde. I may regret that he has so unreservedly resigned himself, in this matter, to his lawyer's direction, as to make any appeal to himself impossible; but I am not prejudiced against him. What I have said would equally apply to any other man, in his situation, high or low. The principle I maintain is a recognised principle among lawyers.

If you were to apply, at the nearest town here, to the first respectable practitioner you could find, he would tell you, as a stranger, what I tell you, as a friend. He would inform you that it is against all rule to abandon the lady's money entirely to the man she marries. He would decline, on grounds of common legal caution, to give the husband, under any circumstances whatever, an interest of twenty thousand pounds in the event of the wife's death."

"Would he really, Gilmore?" said Mr. Fairlie. "If he said anything half so horrid I do assure you I should tinkle my bell for Louis, and have him sent out of the house immediately."

"You shall not irritate me, Mr. Fairlie—for your niece's sake and for her father's sake, you shall not irritate me. You shall take the whole responsibility of this discreditable settlement on your own shoulders, before I leave the room."

"Don't!—now please don't!" said Mr. Fairlie. "Think how precious your time is, Gilmore; and don't throw it away. I would dispute with you, if I could, but I can't—I haven't stamina enough. You want to upset me, to upset yourself, to upset Glyde, and to upset Laura; and—oh, dear me!—all for the sake of the very last thing in the world that is likely to happen. No, dear friend—for the sake of peace and quietness, positively No!"

"I am to understand, then, that you hold by the determination expressed in your letter?"

"Yes, please. So glad we understand each other at last. Sit down again—do!"

I walked at once to the door; and Mr. Fairlie resignedly "tinkled" his hand-bell. Before I left the room, I turned round, and addressed him, for the last time.

"Whatever happens in the future, sir," I said, "remember that my plain duty of warning you has been performed. As the faithful friend and servant of your family, I tell you, at parting, that no daughter of mine should be married to any man alive under such a settlement as you are forcing me to make for Miss Fairlie."

The door opened behind me, and the valet stood waiting on the threshold.

"Louis," said Mr. Fairlie, "show Mr. Gilmore out, and then come back and hold up my etchings for me again. Make them give you a good lunch down stairs—do, Gilmore, make my idle beasts of servants give you a good lunch."

I was too much disgusted to reply; I turned on my heel, and left him in silence. There was an up train, at two o'clock in the afternoon; and by that train I returned to London.

On the Tuesday, I sent in the altered settlement, which practically disinherited the very persons whom Miss Fairlie's own lips had informed me she was most anxious to benefit. I had no choice. Another lawyer would have drawn up the deed if I had refused to undertake it.

My task is done. My personal share in the

events of the family story extends no farther than the point which I have just reached. Other pens than mine will describe the strange circumstances which are now shortly to follow. Seriously and sorrowfully, I close this brief record. Seriously and sorrowfully, I repeat here the parting words that I spoke at Limmeridge House:—No daughter of mine should have been married to any man alive under such a settlement as I was compelled to make for Laura Fairlie.

WITHOUT A NAME.

THE following communication, authenticated by the writer herself, has been addressed to the Conductor of these pages. It appears to him so remarkable and affecting, that he publishes it exactly as he received it, and without even giving it a title. The confidence voluntarily reposed in him by this correspondent, in the fulness of a grateful heart, he of course holds sacred. She lives by the exercise of an accomplishment, and is one of the large number of educated and delicate women who do so in this city.

The sense of gratitude for unmerited kindness is sometimes oppressive. And only by making a public acknowledgment of gratitude to my benefactors can I get quit of the oppression which is now upon me. Should I annoy them by so doing, they will pardon me if they reflect, that it affords me pleasure to chronicle their goodness. I *know* that they will pardon me, because they delight always in giving happiness and pleasure to those under their charge, and being absent from them I am yet overshadowed by their protection, and feel always like an adopted child away from its home.

Can Bethlehem Hospital be a home?

Wearied of life, heart-sick, and utterly despondent, I found refuge within its walls. And my readers will surely forgive all imperfections of style in my narration when they know that for several months I was a patient in this Royal Hospital for lunatics. Had it not been for the unwearied kindness of those under whose authority I was placed, I should not now be able, coherently and quietly, to write down my remembrance of the past, for I should either be the inmate of an asylum for the insane, or I should have passed unrepentant and hopeless into the "Silent Land."

It can interest none to know the cause of my insanity, it may interest many to be made aware of the manner in which my restoration to health of mind was affected.

One lovely summer afternoon I am conveyed, melancholy and utterly indifferent as to my future fate, to the building over whose doors I read plainly Dante's often quoted words,

Leave Hope behind all ye who enter here.

Sensible to all I see and hear, but ever silent and moody, I part from the relatives who have accompanied me, and meekly accept the proffered

arm of the kind-looking attendant who is summoned by the physician's bell, and ordered to take me to "No. 3." Anticipating that some fearful torture awaits me in "No. 3," I yet allow myself, tearless and unresisting, to be conveyed up some broad stone stairs, and find myself presently in a long, light gallery, in which stand, sit, or walk, several women of different age and appearance. The song of birds greets my entrance; the sight of green plants and bright-hued flowers refreshes the eyes accustomed to gaze for many days on the walls of a bedroom, in which my friends had thought it advisable to immure me. Am I in Fairyland? A pretty girl, becomingly dressed, advances with a smile to meet me. This is— But no, I must neither describe nor name the individuals who afterwards became my associates, who bore patiently with the disagreeable moodiness of my manner, who assisted to amuse and cheer me, and who performed for me many acts of disinterested kindness. I often see some of them now; others I may never see again; but I forget none who were kind to me in the time of my need. Sitting—still silent and absorbed in wretched thoughts—at the further end of the gallery, I see, advancing from the door, a lady of dignified presence. She approaches me with slow and decided steps, and a pleased feeling of security steals over me as I gaze upon her benevolent face. No torture will be practised upon me, for I feel certain she will permit no cruelty. The lady wears a black dress and a red shawl; and I have ever since associated a black dress and a red shawl with kindness of heart and suavity of manner. She listens patiently to all who throng around her, and answers all with gentleness; then she pauses beside me. Instinctively I rise. Very pityingly looks the dear lady upon me with her large brown eyes, very soothingly she speaks to me in her musical voice; and, with a gentle caress she leaves me, still silent, although not quite so moody, and pursues her round to comfort those capable of being consoled, and to feel pity for those who cannot feel for themselves. Shortly afterwards, while sitting always at the extremity of the gallery, I see two gentlemen walking, as the dear lady had walked, only perhaps not quite so slowly, towards me. And I feel frightened. For, perhaps, I shall be sent away from the pleasant gallery, and perhaps I shall never see the lady in the black dress and the red shawl again. I had read such fearful tales about Bedlam! But as they approach me, I see that the shorter gentleman is the same who consigned me to the care of the kind-looking attendant, and the taller looks mild and smiles, although I think a little sadly.

They stand looking kindly down upon me, as I sit, shrinking from their gaze, and fearing lest they should read the wicked thoughts always, always stirring within me—the thought that, as for me, there remains no hope of happiness, either in this world, or the world to come: it would be better, had I only the courage, to

end at once the life which is so burdensome to me.

It would, perhaps, be wearisome to detail my life at Bethlehem. I might, had I the skill, delineate many scenes that would amuse, as also many incidents that would pain the reader. But it must content me to record the following facts, and to add that to all, as to me, equal attention and kindness were shown.

Everything was done to amuse and interest me. I was sent, under the charge of an attendant, to numerous places of amusement. I was encouraged to employ myself, and books were lent to me by the head physician. Also he spent much of his time in reasoning with me, always kindly and feelingly, as a father might reason upon the folly and wickedness of my impatience of life. I was an uninteresting, a wearying, for some time an incorrigible patient; but the patience of my guardians never ceased, and at length I was discharged well. I entered the hospital without tears, but I left it sorrowfully, knowing that in the wide wide world there were none who would treat me with so much consideration, none who would so tend and console me, should it please God again to afflict me, as the kind friends who reside within the dear walls of Bethlehem. To each of them I offer upon paper the thanks which I have never been able to utter; to each of them I say—as each one has said to me—in sincerity and confidence,

God bless you!

MAN IN!

It was the endeavour of your Eye-witness in his last report to call the attention of those whom it might concern to a consideration of what steps might be taken to diminish the number of accidents, and injuries to life and limb, which the setting in of a frost usually brings about. It may be, that in dwelling on the apparently unnecessary depth of the lakes in our different parks, the E.-W. was influenced by the recollection of an experience of his own, passed through many years ago, which has left an impression, as vivid now as it was fourteen years since, and as it will be, if the writer live, fourteen years hence. And perhaps a narrative of all that the E.-W. remembers of a break through the ice, an immersion in ten feet of water, a rescue by the icemen belonging to the Royal Humane Society, and an account of the course of treatment which the sufferer by an ice accident goes through at the receiving-house in Hyde Park, will serve to draw increased attention to the merits of that admirable society, to whose agency the Eye-witness owes it that he is an Eye-witness, and through whose instrumentality it happens that the hand which writes these lines is at this moment other than a little heap of crumbling bones and dust.

A child blowing at an extinguished torch, with the motto, "Some little spark may be hidden here yet," is the device of the

Royal Humane Society; and indeed the spark must be a very faint one, if the treatment adopted by the servants and officers of the establishment fail to fan it into a flame. The accredited instances of the resuscitation of those apparently drowned are most extraordinary, and seem to show that until such actual signs of dissolution as stiffness of the limbs, and other unmistakable symptoms, are developed, a hopeful use of the various means of restoring animation should not be given up.

Cases are even on record of a restoration of life after its total suspension for *five hours*; and it is difficult to imagine a more intense gratification than those must experience who, after hours of labour, see at last some hint of life appearing in their patient. As they observe the first convulsive catclings of the chest muscles, the first feeble gasp for breath, the first faint sob or sigh which follows; as they note the slight relaxing of the jaws, the weak flutter of the heart and pulse; the excitement must be extreme, and the anxiety lest the hold obtained on the hardly recovered life should loosen. There is danger even when, with the restoration of the circulation, the senses return. Sometimes, the patient will screech out in alarm, as consciousness revives; at other times, convulsions take place and suddenly cause death.

The writer, in giving his own experience of the efficiency of the Royal Humane Society, will—for the greater convenience of narration—ask leave to tell his story in the first person.

It was fourteen or fifteen years ago at least, and I was then an eager skater: a student of the higher walks (or rather strokes) of the art of skating: a diligent cultivator of that mystery which is at the root of all advancement in this exercise, the mystic "outside edge."

The Round Pond was crowded to inconvenience. The Round Pond is, as most Londoners know, just in front of Kensington Palace; it is rumoured that it was once a gravel pit, and that in consequence its waters are in some parts of very great depth. The number of skaters on this piece of water on the day in question was so great, that there was scarcely a possibility of carrying out a single stroke to completeness. So constant were the collisions between the skaters, and so completely was one's attention absorbed by the necessity of steering clear of other people, that it was hardly possible to enjoy the amusement; I was on the point of giving the thing up and taking off my skates, when it occurred to me that there was one part of the pond on the opposite side, which I had not tried, and which seemed to be less covered with skaters than the other portions of the ice.

Distance is a thing very soon disposed of in skating, and an approach to this more deserted region was the affair of a very few moments. As I drew nearer, I found that my first impression was not an incorrect one; there were fewer people here. Fewer people on

all parts of this side of the pond, and just out there where that pole inscribed "Dangerous" had tumbled over on its side, there was no one. What fools the people must be! Are they afraid? Why, the frost has lasted a fortnight, and any one with eyes in his head would see that that "dangerous" pole has been left there, simply because the proper authorities have forgotten to take it away.

Arrested and balked at every stroke as I had been all the morning, the sight of the clear place, where I could practise unmolested, was inconceivably attractive. I was very young, not more than sixteen or seventeen, and my taming days had not begun. Here was good ice in front, and nobody to knock up against me, and behind was bad ice and a crowd of skaters. Pooh! No danger! That board has been there ever since the frost set in.

Most people who have had anything to do with ice will be aware that that substance is subject to several different kinds of cracks. There is the melodious, ringing, wholesome crack, which ice of any strength is liable to, and which is not indicative of danger; there is the sharp, rattling crack of thin ice, which certainly does show mischief at hand, but which is not perfectly inconsistent with security; and, lastly, there is a crack which he who hears will know by instinct to be a cry of warning, but one which is uttered generally, just too late.

I had not philosophised much on cracks, or, indeed, on anything else, at the time I am writing about. I had my skates on, I saw before me a sheet of ice, and I knew that the frost which was making my fingers tingle, dated from a fortnight back. Such ice too! So black, and so smooth! A few more strokes, and what a sweep I shall have over its polished surface! a few more—Hark! is that man with the life belt on, calling out to me? Yes. What's that!

A crack such as I had never heard before, and which sent the knowledge—not the apprehension, but the certainty—into my soul that I was going through the ice. There was not a clear second of time between the crack and the time when the ice gave way under me, and I was in the water. The cruel, treacherous ice broke away as I held it to with my hands, gave with every touch, and made the space which I had broken away, so large, that water was all around me except just in one spot to which I held, but held gently, seeing the thinness of the edge against which my breast was pressing, and knowing that if I moved, this last fragment might go too, and that then I must inevitably sink—I knew not how far: there was no ground beneath my feet.

How difficult, too, to keep still: the excessive cold of the water making my chest heave convulsively, and causing me to gasp for breath. How difficult to keep still, with the wicked water sucking at me and pulling and drawing me under, until I felt the *toes of my skates scraping the inside of the ice!*

By this time, the words that head this paper were ringing through the air, and the cry of "Man in!" reached me from many voices. I hardly expect it to be believed, but I have a vivid impression that in that hour of extreme danger, and with death so near, it was a gratification to me to hear that cry, and—I was not seventeen, remember—to be called a "man." I had so often writhed under the insult of being called a "boy" by my elders, that this cry of "Man in!" was, in a dim way, a sort of compliment to me. As I lay in the water with my arms stretched out over the piece of ice on which my life depended, I watched the preparations which were going on for my rescue, with an eagerness which none can know but those who have been in some such position. There was no one near me. The machinery of the Humane Society was all far removed from that place. I was skating alone when I dropped through, and had no friend upon the ice.

Still, that lifting and sucking action of the water beneath me—pulling and drawing at me always. The man with the life-belt, with the long ice-ladder on wheels with the air-barrels at one end of it, and a drag fastened to the side, is hastening towards me from the other side. Can I hold on till he comes? The cold seems arresting my very life within me. Am I going to die? My young life—is it at an end already? Oh God! why did I ever do anything wrong! The man with the ice-ladder on wheels, has broken in at fifty yards' distance, and cannot get any nearer to me—the ice is rotten all around. Who can come near to help me? A circle far, far off, of frightened people gazing at me—I cannot see their faces—they are making signs to me, but I cannot understand; they are calling out to me, but I cannot hear. And what would they say at home if they could see me now? Would the icemen try harder to save me, if I had a brother there among the crowd to urge them on? A brother! This piece of ice is giving way; the water, which is sucking at me more and more, has got into my clothes; I am lower down than I was, and the ice to which I cling, is sinking! The man who was coming to save me is still in the hole, and other men are trying to get him out. Every one of those Latin exercises, done with the help of a key—and praises lavished on me for them—I lied about them, and said I had no help—I shall die—and the crowd—and that snow figure which the boys have built up is like the clown I saw last night in the pantomime—and the water is creeping over this piece of ice, and my arms are wet—and the ice will be under soon—and the men with the strange machinery are standing aloof, and cannot get to me, and some are running round the bank, and they have ropes—and one has got a drag—but I am sinking now, my hair is wet, and the water pouring down my collar—and when we were at Naples, my father asked me to go out with him one day and to stay with him while he sketched—and a dog would have gone—but I had some plan of my own, and would not go—and he sighed

—and I shall die—the men with the ropes upon the bank, and with a ladder—it is tied to the ropes—it is pushed along the ice towards me—a man is crawling along the ladder—but too late, for surely this is death—the voices on the bank—what do they say? The man is not far off—he crawls—so slowly—too late—I cannot hold—I cannot see—or hear—or feel—and I shall—die—

Not then. Saved, to write these words some fifteen years afterwards, and to pause from time to time as I do so, and think how those years have passed. Saved, to remember this rescue for an hour after it happened, and then to go back into the world forgetting it. Saved, to pass through other dangers and to escape other perils; but never, perhaps, to be at such close quarters with death.

I have no distinct recollection—I never had any—of how I was got out of the water. I remember something of crouching beside the man on the ladder, a huddled mass of ice and freezing water, the ladder being swiftly drawn ashore by the ropes which were fastened to it, and breaking in once or twice in its progress over the surface of the ice. I remember the horror of each of these new accidents. I remember running as fast as I could, supported on each side by an iceman, from the Round Pond to the receiving-house of the Humane Society. I remember that some one had been sent on to order the warm bath, which I found ready on my arrival. I remember how difficult it was to get my wet clothes off. I remember rejoicing that my stockings were not the pair which were darned so much at the knee, and which would have been discreditable; and I recollect seeing the water poured out of my watch—it was a silver one, but a good performer—on the ground; and then I remember feeling very happy, while the superintendent of the place—a man of some forty years of age, with a kind face and great bushy whiskers—kept throwing the warm water over my chest with his hands as I lay in the bath, and thought how warm it felt, and how strange it was that water should be the first thing resorted to, to repair the mischief which water had done.

Is misfortune good for us, that it makes us feel so happy afterwards? I shall never forget the peace of that time. I shall never forget how, looking up at the face of this man as he sat beside the bath; I thought I had never seen any one who looked so good and so benevolent. He was a man who had the appearance of a sea-captain, and was the sort of person one would wish to have by one in a storm, or indeed in any kind of danger.

The receiving-house in Hyde Park is not in its interior arrangements unlike a ward in a hospital. Clean, and warm, and airy, it is provided with the means of having several warm baths at one time, and of readily putting in practice all the directions which are given in the Society's book for the restoration of those in whom life is suspended. As soon as I had been long enough in

the warm bath, I was taken out and put into a bed between two warm blankets, heated from beneath by a hot water apparatus, but without sheets. The next remedy applied, was a glass of scalding brandy-and-water of considerable strength; after drinking which I lay down again, and thought I had never been so warm or so comfortable in all my life. I remained there all the afternoon, in a half-dreamy state, watching the attendants as they moved about the room, putting to rights the things which had been deranged on my account, and listening to the sound of the turning over of leaves, which came from an adjoining room, where the superintendent was sitting, waiting till he might be wanted again, and reading, to beguile the time, a book of shipwrecks. Meanwhile, a messenger had been sent to my house for dry clothes. The messenger thoughtfully chosen was a woman, lest, if one of the men in his remarkable costume had gone, he might alarm those to whom he was sent in an unnecessary degree. By the time the dry clothes had arrived, I was just waking up from a pleasant doze. I was soon dressed, and was safe at home by the fireside, before the lamps were lighted in the streets.

It happened but a few afternoons before this present writing, that the Eye-witness was passing in his solitary walk along the north bank of the Serpentine, just as the short daylight of December was coming to an end. It was a damp and melancholy evening, and the piece of water described last week as the scene of so much life and excitement, was deserted, except by one lonely and overgrown blue-coat boy, who stood on the bank testing the strength of what remained of the ice, with one of his long, yellow legs, and holding on the while by a post which supported one of those exhortations to protect the water-fowl, which meet the public eye so often in our parks. The E.-W. had been thinking, as he walked along, and saw a couple of these same water-fowl careering over his head, in a flight surely more rapid than that of other birds, that with such powers of diving, swimming, and flying combined, these creatures had a very agreeable notion of passing their lives. Well fed, able to enjoy the privileges of birds, beasts, and fish at once, and with nothing to do, their lot seems without a drawback; it is a curious refutation of the theory that happiness is equally divided, to turn from a contemplation of the existence of these water-fowl, to that of a donkey upon Hampstead Heath.

Occupied with these thoughts, the E.-W. had walked on till he found himself opposite that receiving-house of the Royal Humane Society, in which he had passed through the course of treatment described above. It must be owned that the building is not a cheerful edifice, and that it is strangely and funereally suggestive of a mausoleum. And yet a strong inclination came upon your Eye-witness, as he stood before the house, to revisit the room in which he had been so humanely dealt with, years ago. Cruising

round to the back of the mausoleum, your Eye-witness came suddenly upon a semi-official looking man, who had the appearance of something between a river steamer ticket-collector and a diver out of work, and who was entangling himself with some very hooky drags at the back of the building, near to a suspicious shed, which looked like a dead-house. Heaven! by what break-ladders, by what deadly implements, by what coils of rope, by what sledges of deliverance, was this man not surrounded! The engines that rescue you from death—as surgeons' instruments, hospital appurtenances, life-boats, drags, and ice-tackle—are as terrible to look on as the apparatus of death itself.

The man who had been coiling drag-ropes, upon being questioned by the E.-W. as to when he could look over the inside of the mausoleum, suggested that he could "throw his eye over it" now, if he liked, and if he did not mind the faintness of the light. There was light enough for all that the Eye-witness wanted to see, and there was even something in the approach of twilight that made the notion of penetrating into this tomb—where men are saved from the tomb—additionally attractive. Your Eye-witness advanced to the front entrance, and the ex-iceman went round to the back, to let him in.

The first sounds that reached the writer's ears as he entered the building, were sounds of music, and of children's voices, singing some touching melody. The superintendent lived there, the iceman said—"the superintendent lived there and his family, and the children were singing, as they did most evenings."

There was the room, there was the bath, the bed! All smaller, of course, than the Eye-witness recollected them, but all in the same position as they were fifteen years ago. There was the other room, where the man had sat, reading the book about shipwrecks. There were the printed directions for the recovery of the apparently drowned, hanging against the wall, and there was the Society's device of the child blowing at the extinguished torch, with the motto round it. It chanced that your Eye-witness was left alone in this room, for, having expressed a wish to possess a copy of the last-printed Report of the Royal Humane Society, the ex-iceman had to go round to the back of the premises to get it. He went out at the front door of the building; it closed behind him with a great crash; and the Eye-witness was left the only occupant of the place. The children, in a part of the building shut off from the rest, were still singing to a simple air played on a piano, the darkness was gathering about the walls, and the visitor sat down upon a chair by the side of the bed in which he had once passed a winter's afternoon.

What anxious hearts had beaten in this place! What faces, pale with suspense, had gathered, perhaps, round this very bed, as some one linked to those who looked on, by ties of blood, lay there, with glazed eyes, and with the foam upon his lips! And the sufferer himself, his body resenting the revival going on within it, writhing

and convulsed under the newly stirring life—the sufferer himself, with the machinery of his existence labouring so hard in its efforts to recommence the functions which had stopped, it seemed just now, for ever!

And then, how soon forgotten! The life, the precious trust, given back to him—again to be misused, as soon as it was regained. The escape, how soon forgotten by him who sustained it, as well as by the friends who stood around.

How soon forgotten! How soon was the rescue experienced by the writer of these words, scattered out of his mind to give place to trifles. How soon is the Magdalen forgetful of her fall, and once more thoughtful about the tying of her hair and the fit of her dress. How soon is the widow attentive to her mourning, and anxious about the judicious crimping of her cap. "To the grave with the dead, and the living to the bread," is still the cry to-day, as it was in the time of Cervantes.

And, indeed, it must be so. In the room itself, there was as great a combination of the grave and the trifling, as elsewhere. On the lid which covered the hot bath in which the dead-alive is placed, was laid a woman's half-finished dress of a gay and brilliant pattern, a perambulator was perched upon one of the beds, and the children in the adjoining compartment of the house had begun to sing a comic negro melody.

The door opened again with a sounding crash. The ex-iceman returned with the Report, and the Eye-witness passing out into the empty park, looked once again to where the elms grow tall about the pond at Kensington, and thought of what had happened to him there as he walked homeward, and as the darkness of the longest night in the year dropped down upon the earth.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

Come, sunny looks, that in my memory throng;

Come! bringing back some happy afternoon;

Come! for your gentle presence is the song

Without which Nature hums a lonely tune.

Oh, light feet, tread the narrow path once more;

Come to my cry, fair forms, and, resting near,

On the dear rocks where you have sat before,

A little while renew the golden year.

Come to this spot, whence we so oft have viewed

The gleam of waves, rock-broken, round the bay,

Come once more, or wild grasses will intrude,

And clasp their hands across the narrow way;

Come, for the place is fair as land of dream,

And, through the rushes, winds hum mournfully,

As if just moved in slumber, and the stream

Still struggles through its cresses to the sea.

'Tis vain to call; I once the strain have heard,

That lacked no note to make the tune complete,

Once, wakened by the touch of some kind word,

I found a garden fair, with flowers sweet;

There, plucking fruits from many a drooping bough,

I stayed, untroubled by foreboding doubt;

Once have I passed the golden year, and now

I see it far back, like a star going out.

The daisies of the golden year are dead,
 Its sunsets will not touch the west again,
 Its glories are removed, its blessings fled,
 And only fully known when sought in vain;
 The same sweet voices I shall never hear,
 For the fair forms that once my pathway crossed
 Are gone, with waters of the golden year
 That now are mingled in the sea and lost.

VITTORIA ACCORAMBONI.

A TRUE ITALIAN HISTORY. IN NINE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. GOING UP TO TOWN TO BE "BROUGHT OUT."

It was in the last quarter of that stormy and many-coloured sixteenth century—time of "renaissance" we call it, but a time of universal dissolution and near approaching end of all things, as it appeared to the Tribulation-mongers of that day—that the following facts occurred. They really did occur. No filling in of historical outline with lights and shadows of fictitious detail, and no heightening of colour for the sake of effect, shall be attempted in this narrative; the reader is invited to receive the tale as a piece of well-authenticated history: showing, somewhat strikingly, how the world went in the good old times three hundred years ago.

There lived in the remote little city of Gubbio an ancient but obscure family of provincial nobles, named Accoramboni. Gubbio, in its pleasant niche at the western foot of that part of the Apennines which crosses the province of the ecclesiastical state called the Marches, was a long way from Rome—a longer way, taking all the difficulties of the journey into account, than London is now-a-days. And in proportion to its distance from Rome, the centre of life, wealth, honour, preferment, and all good things, despite its ante-Roman Etrurian reminiscences, and other claims to respect, was life at Gubbio stagnant and obscure. The sun, to use Queen Dido's metaphor, yoked his team very far away from the quiet little city under the Apennines. Count Claudio Accoramboni and his countess, however, might have been content to live and die, and make their wine and press their olives on the paternal acres, as a long line of unrecorded Accorambonis had done before them, had they not chanced to have a daughter, who grew in this rustic retirement so rare a perfection of loveliness and grace, that her parents felt it to be their duty to the dear girl to give her a few seasons in town. In fact, Vittoria Accoramboni was rightly judged by her judicious parents to be far too superior an article for the native Gubbio market.

All the chroniclers—and they are many—who have left records of Vittoria and her eventful history, vie with each other in their enthusiastic accounts of her surpassing beauty. And yet this, we are assured, was but one portion of the irresistible charm with which she enchanted all who came within the sphere of her influence. One grave old monk writes—crossing himself, one may fancy, the while—of the "portentous

power of attraction" which her tongue exercised when she spoke. Others speak of the inimitable grace of her movements, the sylph-like perfection of her form, her artless elegance, and entire freedom from all affectation. Her talents, too, were no less admirable than her beauty. She was a poetess; and if the productions of her muse, whether printed or preserved in manuscript, cannot be said to be much read by her countrymen of the present generation, yet they sufficed to obtain a place for her name in the huge volumes of the literary historians of her country. Quadrio, Tiraboschi, Mazzuchelli, and the others, all have a niche in their Pantheons for the fairest of their host of songstresses.

It has often been remarked that the wide differences of social habits, and still more of moral feeling, which exist between one age and social system and another, make it exceedingly difficult for us duly to appreciate and understand the life of the middle ages, and to estimate fairly the characters of its actors. And, doubtless, the entire difference of our own practice and modes of thought with respect to such matters must have the effect of making the conduct of Count Claudio Accoramboni and his wife, in this business of the disposal of their peerless daughter to the best advantage, seem altogether strange and unnatural. As soon as ever her surpassing beauty, and rare endowments of mind and body, manifested themselves, Vittoria seems to have been considered by this sixteenth century family as a valuable piece of marketable property, to be disposed of in such manner as would produce the greatest amount of advantage to the family. The means adopted to this end, and the differences of opinion on the subject between various members of the family, will further illustrate the enormous difference of our own ways of thinking and acting on such subjects.

Rome, of course, was the only market for such merchandise as Count Claudio had to offer for sale; and to Rome, accordingly, the Accoramboni family removed. Vittoria had a good escort on her long and far from safe journey to the capital of the world; for, besides father and mother, four adult brothers accompanied her—remarkably noble and needy youths, all trusting to Vittoria, the family treasure, to open for them some of the numerous roads to fortune, which in those days all converged on the Papal city.

This wonderful Rome had still in the sixteenth century very legitimate pretensions to take rank as the capital of the civilised world. The authority which the popes claimed over all the civil powers of Christendom, and which, though often rebelled against in practice, was still admitted almost universally in theory, caused their capital to be the centre of all the political intrigues and schemes of Europe; caused it to be perpetually thronged with ambassadors and diplomatists of every grade, with petitioners, adventurers, fortune-hunters, and notabilities of every sort from every part of the world. Most of the special peculiarities which stamped the age with its own social character existed in a concentrated degree

at Rome. The system of superseding law by privilege, which lay at the root of most of the social disorders of the age, existed in greater intensity in Rome than in any other society. The turbulences and disorders arising thence were more constant, more audacious, and more serious there than elsewhere. The wonderful encroachment of ecclesiastical power, and its strange and curious intermixture in all the affairs of life, which also was one leading characteristic of the time, was, as might have been expected, most remarkable and most mischievously active in Rome. It was the headquarters, too, of literature, art, and magnificence. The gorgeous and ostentatious splendour which characterised the period were there to be seen in their most dazzling excess and profusion. In no city of similar size, probably, was ever known so great an expenditure of wealth. For Rome, like a spendthrift swindler, had the spending of revenues drawn from every country in Europe. Unproductive herself, she squandered the lightly-come-by contributions from every hive of industrious workers, and was only left to beggary when her trick was detected.

Every new pope brought up fresh swarms of relatives, dependents, friends, countrymen, to seek their fortune in the great world-carnival. In the papacy of a Genoese pope, Rome would swarm with Ligurians. With a Medici in St. Peter's chair, Florence almost monopolised the good things which flow from the hand of Heaven's viceroy. With the Bolognese pope, who held the keys at the time we are writing of, Bologna had her turn. And the hot pursuit of Fortune was all the hotter, and the means used for attracting her smile were all the more unscrupulous, because popes' reigns are mostly short. In no case was the need of hurry to make hay while the sun shone, more imperative. A pope's death was as a sudden and entire turn of the wheel of Fortune. Those who were at the top found themselves, between the rising and the setting of the sun, hurled to the bottom; and those who were at the bottom as suddenly were lifted to the top. And the recurrence of these violent changes, which threw the whole Roman world into tenfold confusion, turbulence, and trouble, was strangely frequent. During the whole of the sixteenth century the popes reigned, on an average, only six years each. In the natural course of things it must be expected that the mode of making a pope would ensure his being an old man. But this probability was further increased by the frequent policy of the College of Cardinals. The different parties who found themselves, as would of course frequently happen, unable to secure the election they wished, would unite in selecting as pope some member of their body whose age and infirmities seemed to promise that they would very shortly have another opportunity of trying their strength in the conclave. Many popes owed their elevation, solely to this consideration.

A thirteenth Gregory was seated in the chair of St. Peter at the time Vittoria and her family

made their appearance on this seething, many-coloured, and turbulent scene. We have not the precise date of their journey. But it is certain that it was after 1576, and before—probably not much before—1580. Rome was in a yet more turbulent and lawless condition than usual during these years. For the reigning Pope was a particularly weak and incapable ruler. Gregory the Thirteenth, we are told, was not stained by any of those more glaring vices which had marked many of his recent predecessors. He simply neglected every portion of his manifold duties. His father, as one of the Venetian ambassadors reports to the Senate, lived to be eighty, and his grandfather to be ninety. And the great and absorbing object of the Pope's thoughts and cares was to live as long. With this view, says the ambassador, he systematically refused to occupy himself with any troublesome business, on the ground that nothing is more conducive to longevity than a mind at ease! When reports were made to him of the scandalous scenes of anarchy and violence which were continually occurring, and were rendering his capital as unsafe a residence for quiet citizens as a field of battle or a den of robbers, he never was betrayed into expending more of his carefully treasured vital force than was needed for tranquilly observing that he would pray for the evil-doers.

During this and the preceding centuries the great feudal princes and barons of the ancient and powerful clans of Savelli, Orsini, Colonna, Gaetani, and others, such were the pest and ever-present danger of Rome. Constantly in open warfare with each other, and often with the popes themselves, these haughty and unruly subjects, and their numerous bodies of armed retainers, who knew no law save the will of their employer, often tasked to the utmost the strength of the most vigorous of the popes. And under such a ruler as Gregory the Thirteenth their utter lawlessness reduced Rome to a state of anarchy which, had it continued unchecked, must have entirely sapped the foundations of all civil society. A notice of one of the ordinary street tumults that took place about the time in question, as it has been preserved in the pages of a contemporary chronicler, will serve to give an idea of the sort of deeds which were wont to pass in Rome unchecked and unpunished, and will, at the same time, introduce to the reader one of the principal "dramatis personæ" in the tale we have to tell.

The "Bargello," as the principal police-officer of the city was called, had, with his band of armed followers, arrested certain outlaws belonging to the territory of Naples; and it would seem that these men were in the pay, or otherwise under the protection, of some one of the great Roman barons. While the bargello, therefore, was conducting his prisoners through the streets, he was met by a cavalcade of noble youths, Raimondo Orsini, Pietro Gaetani, Silla Savelli, and others, who disputed his passage. The bargello, writes the chronicler, "spoke to them cap in hand, with great respect, endea-

vouring to quiet them, and persuade them to let him do his duty. They, however, would hear nothing, but attacked him and his men, killed several, took others into houses, and flung them from the windows, to the great ignominy and contumely of public justice." All this, however, could not have mattered much, or have been worth recording, but that an unlucky shot from one of the bargello's men killed the noble Raimondo Orsini. The bargello at once fled from Rome, knowing full well that neither pope nor law could save his life from the vengeance of the Orsini. But the noble anger of that proud house was not to be thus balked. And Ludovico Orsini, the brother of Raimondo, and the gentleman with whom the reader will have to make further acquaintance, avenged his brother, and asserted the honour of the clan, by murdering the lieutenant-general of police, the officer on whom the bargello depended, as he was coming down from the papal palace on Monte Cavallo.

Such was the Roman world to which Count Claudio Accoramboni was bringing his daughter and four sons to seek their fortunes about the year 1578.

But in accordance with the saying, that when things are at the worst they must mend, there was a change preparing for Rome and its lawless nobles, and almost equally villanous outlawed bandits, in a manner and from a quarter from which no human being in Rome dreamed of expecting it.

Among the cardinals resident in the city was an old man whose infirmities made him seem yet older than he was, and whose quiet and retired life was remarkable only for its purity and for its perfect inoffensiveness to any man alive. Nor were the social position or connexions of this good old man more calculated to draw attention on him than the unpretending modesty of his blameless life. For the old Cardinal di Montalto was the son of a peasant of the March of Ancona; had begun life as an humble mendicant friar; and having first risen by his virtues and talents to be the general of his order, had by this road reached the cardinalate. Yet it was on this obscure old man that the eyes of his fellows of the Sacred College had turned as the most likely candidate for the papacy, on the evidently not distant day when Gregory the Thirteenth, despite all his precautions, should not be able to live any longer. There were not wanting members of the college bearing the names of Medici, Este, Farnese, and others of the great princely families of Italy. But every man was afraid of his fellow. Most men in Rome at that day, whether clerical or lay, had so much cause to fear! And it was thought that no man need fear poor old Cardinal di Montalto, who had never given offence to any one, or seemed capable of conceiving a feeling of animosity or resentment. Besides the very manifest infirmities of old Peretti—that was the Cardinal di Montalto's family name—his tottering gait and bent body were, on the principle above mentioned, all recommendations in his

favour. It was clear he could not last long. And his short papacy would give rival parties time, as each hoped, to strengthen itself, and to be ready then for the struggle which they feared to undertake at the present moment. As for the old man himself, when spoken to on the subject, he would treat the matter as one in which a man so near the grave could have little interest; and with a mild sigh and gentle shake of his bent head, followed by a hollow cough, would give his hearers to understand how entirely his mind was occupied on other things.

Rome, however, though quite agreeing with the Cardinal di Montalto in the opinion that he could not last long, yet thought it probable that he would last longer than the octogenarian pope; and considered that for such brief space he would be the most convenient, inoffensive, meek pope that could be found. Despite himself, therefore, Felix Peretti, Cardinal di Montalto, occupied an important position in the Roman world when the Accoramboni family arrived in the Eternal City.

CHAPTER II. THREE STRINGS TO THE HEROINE'S BOW.

THE "sensation" caused by the first appearance of the beauty on this great theatre and focus of all the grandeurs of the world, exceeded all that the proprietors of the new "great attraction" had promised themselves. All Rome talked of nothing else than the lovely and accomplished Vittoria. Cardinals met to discuss the rival pretensions of the French and Spanish courts, but found themselves neglecting such trifling matters to expatiate, quite en connoiseurs, on the marvellous perfections of the young provincial from the Marches. Princes of the noblest and most powerful families of Italy, young and old, single or married, swore that the bewitching stranger was worthy of promotion to the honour of becoming—the plaything of an hour to any one of them. Father, mother, and brothers, all found themselves suddenly changed into people of importance; sought for, courted and made much of by magnates lay and ecclesiastical, into whose presence they would have hardly ventured to come cap in hand a few short weeks ago. In a word, their speculation promised excellently well; and only prudence was needed to make the most of it. Very much prudence; Italian prudence, of a far more long-sighted and subtly calculating kind than is ordinarily known to the more off-hand and open men of a less guileful race. This excess of prudence, and the exaggerated value attached to it, and admiration of it, is a marked and peculiar characteristic of the Italian character. It is not a pleasing one. And were it not that there seem to be reasons for believing that the same peculiarity marked the old Roman character, it might be attributed to the unhappy social organisation which has for so many centuries sown the field of society broadcast with dangers and pitfalls of all kinds, so as to make every man afraid of his neighbour. It is difficult not to place somewhat of the strange cautiousness

which meets one at every turn both in Italian histories of the past and in the modern life of the people, to the account of this cause. But we remember the dictum of the old poet, who more than any other has daguerretyped for us the life, manners, and modes of thought of the old Roman world—Horace—to the effect that “no one of the gods refuses his favour to the man whom Prudence stands by,” and recognise in the thought the ancestors of Italy’s present and mediæval inhabitants.

The game now to be played out by the combined sagacity of the Accoramboni family was one which called forth all the resources of this favourite faculty. If the prizes in the wheel were numerous and splendid, so also were the dangers which lay thick and various round about them; so many things had to be considered in that strangely constituted and cynically corrupt Roman world, which the members of a simpler, because a more law-governed, state of society would never dream of. Enmities had to be forecastingly provided against. And if this were impossible, they were to be providently counteracted by such protections as might be most suited for overcoming them; and if it were absolutely inevitable to give offence either to one or to another person, the means of injuring possessed by either at the time being or prospectively in the future, had to be carefully and sagaciously compared and balanced. And in a state of society where every man from my lord cardinal down to the vagabond, who was first cousin to the laundress who washed for my lord cardinal’s valet, and every woman from the princess of an all but sovereign house down to the old hag on whose daughter one of his highness’s lawless free lances was known to cast an eye of affection—all in every class and in every degree sought to secure life, property, and advancement not by their own merits or industry, or the protection of the public law, but by favour, privilege, and patronage—in such a state of society these calculations and provisions were complex and difficult matters, as will be seen in the sequel of this true history.

No part of the difficulty which lay before Vittoria’s judicious father and anxious mother, arose from lack of eligible candidates for their daughter’s favour. Suitors on all sorts of terms came forward in abundance. To choose wisely and prudently among them, was the point. And the difficulty of the case was sadly increased by a discordance of opinion between Vittoria’s papa and mamma. The case was as follows: From among the crowd of prétendants, three stood forward prominently as the most promising. The first was Francesco Peretti, the favourite nephew of poor quiet old Cardinal di Montalto. The Perettis were poor, and not even noble. What then had simple Francesco Peretti to offer, that could justify him in dreaming of carrying off a prize that princes and cardinals were disputing? His personal qualifications may have been high, or may have been none at all. Of the many contemporary writers who have expressly or incidentally mentioned the facts of

this history, no one has thought it worth his while to advert even to such irrelevant circumstances. But Francesco Peretti was the nephew of the uncle; and it might well be that the nephew of old Fra Felice (Friar Felix, as we should say) would turn out to be the greatest catch in all Rome. For all the world in the Eternal City seemed to have made up their minds that the decrepit old cardinal friar was to be pope. And a pope’s favourite nephew! And such a pope; a meek old man used to the quietest retirement, without worldly sense or passion in him enough to resent the taking of his cloak off his back! Why, it would be as good as having the papacy itself for one’s dower! “And then, my dear Vittoria, it is your duty, you know, to think of your family. There are four brothers! God knows, it’s little enough I can do for them. But with the position that such a marriage would place you in, there are no limits—positively *no* limits to the hopes that might open before all of us.” It is true that in catching Peretti, Vittoria was playing her great stake for a bird not in the hand, but still in the bush of the future. It was possible, after all, that the Cardinal di Montalto might never be pope. But, on the other hand, the Peretti marriage was free from great risks and perils which surrounded the union with another of the trio of aspirants, who, out of all those that at first entered their names, finally ran for the plate.

All these things duly meditated and calculated, papa Accoramboni declared himself decidedly in favour of knocking down all that desirable lot, with magnificent head of hair annexed, lovely eyes, attractive form, brilliant accomplishments laid on regardless of expense, &c. &c. &c., known by the name and title of Vittoria Accoramboni to Francesco Peretti, as to the best bidder.

But, as has been said, there was an unhappy difference of opinion between the chiefs of the Accoramboni councils. And while in reply to Peretti’s proposals, “papa said, yes! she may; mamma said, no! she shan’t!” For the female imagination was dazzled by the brilliant magnificence of the second candidate for her daughter’s hand. This was no less a man than the Italian historical reader’s old acquaintance Prince Paolo Giordano Orsini! There was an offer! the head of all the Orsini clan! the noblest family in Rome! The owner of immense territories, and so powerful, that popes themselves quailed before him, and hesitated to put the law in execution against him or his. Was such a son-in-law to be for a moment compared to the obscure nephew of an old monk, who might or might not one day be pope? In this case the bird was a bird in the hand, and not one in the bush; and a bird of such dazzling plumage! The prince was the man for the lady mother’s money; and if her word was worth anything, no trumpery commoner should ever have her darling child, &c. &c. &c.—a whole page of etceteras!

There were, however, some drawbacks to the brilliant advantages of a union with the prince;

that must be admitted. In the first place—and this was the consideration that chiefly weighed with the prudent and wary father—the whole of the powerful and unscrupulous Orsini clan would doubtless be furious at such a misarrangement on the part of its chief. And there were other very influential personages likely to be highly offended by the marriage. It was not without reason, in short, that Count Claudio Accoramboni considered the connexion, however flattering, as doubly hazardous. Then, again, the noble Orsini had, about two years previously, murdered his first wife. Not that such a circumstance could be held in any wise to sully the character of one in the unattackable position of the Prince Orsini, or that any great weight should be attributed to an accident that would frequently happen in the noblest families. Still, Vittoria's father thought that, all other things being equal, it might be held to be an objection to a son-in-law in the eyes of a fond parent; while her mamma felt strongly that in the case of a prince, it was mere invidious cavilling to rake up matters of a kind that were never alluded to in really good society. Again: though of course no nobility could be more exalted, more undoubted, more ancient and celebrated than that of the chief of the great house of Orsini, whose names are to be found on every page of the history of their country for hundreds of years back, as the constant disturbers of peaceful life and social progress, by their noble determination to be subject to no law save that of their own fierce will, though all the world recognised this nobility as of the purest water and most genuine dye, yet, somehow or other, old Dame Nature, obstinately taking note only of his highness's manner of life, had got it into her stupid old head that he was not noble at all, but to a remarkable degree the reverse. Not that it would have signified a rush what Dame Nature, with her old-fashioned notions, might have thought about the matter, had it not been that she had unfortunately found the means of expressing her opinion so emphatically, that it was impossible not to be more or less annoyed by it. It was now fifty years that she had been making up her mind as to the genuineness of the nobility of the most noble prince; and she now announced her opinion on the subject to the world by fashioning him into the most hideously bloated caricature of the human form and face divine that a nightmare fancy could conceive. He was, we are told, so enormously fat, that his leg was as large round as an ordinary man's body. And one of these huge unnaturally bloated limbs was afflicted with a loathsome cancerous affection, named, we are told by the science of that good old time, a "lupa," or she-wolf, because it was necessary continually to supply it with abundant applications of raw flesh, in order that, exerting on them its destroying power, it might so the more spare the living tissues of the noble patient's body. It might seem, on the whole, to the livers in a degenerate age, that these circumstances might also have weighed somewhat in the estimate of the prince as a bridegroom, formed by the young lady and her family. But

they do not appear to have done so. And the facts have been preserved by the contemporary writers only as the envious talk of other Roman ladies, mothers and daughters, who would fain have secured the noble prince, lupa and all, for themselves.

Strange, is it not, to note how entirely changed our nineteenth century world is from a state of society in which noble matrons and damsels could be led by such feelings to indulge in such talk! What do May Fair drawing-rooms care about the fifty years, or other drawbacks, of great catches in the matrimonial market, that have been already caught? But Roman sixteenth-century saloons did, as it seems, find no little delectation in such considerations.

That other little circumstance of the removal of his first wife by the agency of his highness's own noble hands, though it was by no means felt to have cast any stain on the prince's fair fame as a knight and a gentleman, or to have rendered him generally on that account a less desirable family connexion, yet was one of the causes that, as prudent Count Accoramboni perceived, contributed to surround a marriage between his daughter and the prince with especial danger. For the first Princess Orsini, thus removed, was no other than Isabella dei Medici, the sister of Francis, the reigning Duke of Florence, and of the Cardinal Ferdinand dei Medici, one of the most powerful of the Sacred College. Now this poor Isabella had unhappily been led, by the total neglect of her noble husband, to requite his conduct to her in such sort, as to make her death no less necessary to the honour of her "serene" and "most reverend" brothers, than to that of her husband. So much so, that the former, far from feeling any estrangement from their brother-in-law on that account, considered themselves beholden to him for his nice care for the reputation of the family. And, notwithstanding any little unpleasantness as to the manner of their dear departed sister's death, the duke and the cardinal would have felt that the "honour" of the Medici family was dreadfully compromised by their brother-in-law making so shocking a misalliance. And Count Accoramboni wisely considered that it might not pay in the long run to encounter such enmities, even to make his daughter Princess Orsini.

But no prudent considerations of this kind could induce his lady wife to give up the dear vision of becoming mother-in-law to a prince. Despite his fifty years, his infirmities, and his monstrous unwieldy person, she felt that a prince is a prince for a' that, and a' that, and twice as muckle's a' that. And the Orsini offer had, accordingly, her consistent and unflinching support.

As for the third proposals, perhaps it would have been better to say nothing about them, were it not for the paramount obligation to tell the truth, and, as far as in him lies, the whole truth, which is binding on whosoever presumes to meddle with history. Be as angry as you will, gentle reader, with the novelist who recounts to

you what you had rather not hear. His business and duty is to please you. But do not blame a poor dealer with facts, who is forbidden by the primary law of his duty to make things pleasant on all occasions, and who would fail in setting before you a true picture of any bygone state of society, if he shrank from telling you everything which is disagreeable in the telling.

Well, then, the beautiful Vittoria's third suitor was his eminence the most reverend sexagenarian Cardinal Bishop Farnese. Suitor? Proposals? Why, the old man was a priest irrevocably vowed to celibacy! Yes, indeed. That was unquestionably the state of the case. And yet his "proposals" had the energetic support of two of the brothers. What! when it has been just related how two other brothers, acting according to the ideas prevalent in that age, thought it necessary to connive at their fallen sister's murder, to purge the family of the disgrace brought on it by her fault! And these two Accoramboni brothers, too, were of "noble birth." But they were reprobate castaways then, these young Gubbio counts? Far from it! One of them, we are assured by a monk who has written a biography of Sixtus the Fifth, was "a young man of saintly morals," and was shortly afterwards made a bishop. And, doubtless, if proposals of the nature of those of his venerable eminence the Cardinal Farnese had come from any one of the same rank as the Accorambonis, the young brother of saintly morals would have duly resented them. That is the whole explanation of the matter. What but honour could accrue to an obscure provincial count's daughter and her family from any connexion with a cardinal and a Farnese?

Such were the principles avowed and recognised in the Roman world of the sixteenth century.

MORE VERY COMMON LAW.

HAVING spoken of some of the legal incidents of Mr. Blank's infancy, we purpose in this paper to treat shortly of his marriage.

When we state, then, that since his last appearance in these pages the ecclesiastical machinery of St. George's, Hanover-square, has been worked up to its highest pressure in the service of our illustrative man, and that a bench of clergymen and a full choral service have been brought to bear upon him in his capacity of bridegroom, we expect that no one (including Sir C. Cresswell) will question the fact of his marriage.

True, there were other means equally efficacious, though possibly more plebeian, by which he could have effected his object; but, as he preferred a stylish wedding, we will not grudge him that transient enjoyment. He might, had he been so minded, have dispensed with the clerical element entirely, and have been married by an attorney and a retired pork-butcher in the dusty seclusion of the Registrar's office; but more of this hereafter. He might, let us for our present

purpose say, have been married after "due publication of the banns," and, as this is possibly the most popular form of the ceremony, we will mention a point or two of law affecting it.

If it were our present business to criticise, in place of illustrating, the law as we find it, we should feel disposed to find a little fault with this portion of our jurisprudence as it now stands. We should feel disposed, for example, to say that we think it affords too good an opening to any man with a taste for matrimony and a diversity of wives, to be consistent with our national abstemiousness in that respect. As thus: "Any marriage," the *boo's* tell us, "solemnised after publication of banns in a false name, when this false name has been given with the privity and consent of *both* the parties, can be set aside on application to Her Majesty's Court of Divorce." As to what the law will construe as "privity and consent" is at present an open question, upon which the following cases may throw a little light:

A certain amorous youth of nineteen fell in love with his father's cook, aged thirty, and made proposals of marriage to that domestic. The cook, conjecturing that the marriage might not be acceptable to her intended husband's family, persuaded him, for the purpose of concealment, to have the banns published in the name of "John:" the youth's name being "Henry John," and the cook being constantly in the habit of addressing him by his first name. They were married, but, as might have been expected, they were not particularly happy; and a suit having been instituted for the purpose of setting aside the marriage, it was declared null and void.

Again (to go no further back than to a case decided before Sir C. Cresswell a short time since), a young man, a minor, named Bower Wood, published his banns, with his intended wife's privity and consent, in the name of John Wood: he having expectations from his uncle, Mr. Bower, and not wishing to offend that gentleman. On application to the Divorce Court, the marriage was annulled, on the ground of this false publication.

On the other hand, a man in humble circumstances, named James Carpenter, married (we quote a reported case) a woman named Susannah Spence. For some reason which is not mentioned, the woman's name in the publication of banns, was stated to be "Agnes Watts." During the marriage ceremony, the clergyman addressed her as "Agnes," and she, thinking that she was to be married in her own proper name, looked at Carpenter: whereupon he (surly bridegroom that he was) told her to "hold her tongue." This marriage, to the discomfiture, let us hope, of the ungracious Carpenter, who wished to set it aside, was afterwards upheld, on the ground that only one of the parties was ignorant of the false publication.

This is the present position of the law, with which we are disposed to quarrel. So long as divorce was a luxury not easily attainable, and, consequently, not much sought after, this con-

sequence of false publication might not have been of great moment, but we take it to be otherwise now. Do we not (lawyers included) know that Phyllis is very prone to yield to the suggestion of Corydon in that tender billing and cooing season before the banns are published? Suppose, then, that as they sit under the trysting-tree, when the deepening twilight, &c., and the sweet dalliance of the balmy breeze, &c.—suppose that Corydon at that season should suggest to Phyllis dear, for any reason in the world (she wouldn't probe the logic of it very deeply), that the banns should be published in any other name than his, would Phyllis always be found courageously to answer No? And suppose, further, that Corydon should ever come (alas for the possibility of such things!) to grow weary of Phyllis dear, would it not be rather hard upon the damsel that her foolish weakness in the twilight, should prove her undoing in her later married life? We really think it would.

So far banns; but, as our illustrative man was married by license, it behoves us to speak a word or two as to that ceremony.

Now, as to banns and licenses, "note a diversitie." If a license be obtained under false names, and the marriage be solemnised thereupon, the marriage is good; but, it is otherwise (as we have shown) with a marriage celebrated after banns have been published in a wrong name. The reason of this distinction is sufficiently obvious.

The very object to be gained by publication of the banns being publicity, this purpose, should the publication be made in false names, is utterly defeated. On the other hand, a license not being a matter of public notoriety, is granted by the ordinary upon such evidence as he may be content to receive.

A rather curious case illustrative of the stability of a marriage by license, though celebrated under a false name, was heard before Sir William Scott (afterwards Lord Stowell):

A woman, named Sarah Burt, endowed with a dreadful partiality for aliases, left her father's house in the year 1781, and went to reside with her sister: assuming the name of Sarah Melville, and stating that she was a widow. Seven years afterwards, she left her sister, and went to live alone: styling herself, by way of variety, Elizabeth Melville. Under this name, she was married; but the third change was not a happy one, and her husband endeavoured to set aside the marriage. Sir William Scott, however, entertained the opinion that the marriage could not be set aside, and he acted upon it. Marriage by license, therefore, we see, is valid even if the license have been obtained in a false name: "provided always," says my Lord Ellenborough, "that the false name be not intended to cover a fraud on the other party."

In mentioning that our illustrative man might have employed other means to attain his present felicity of a more plebeian character, we ought to have remembered one more aristocratic. There is "special license." Not thinking it necessary, however, to dilate upon this part of our subject,

we will content ourselves by stating that this is a delightful and rather costly prerogative, granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which will enable anybody to be married anywhere and at any time, and which any of our readers can obtain on application to his lordship, and the enclosure of a negotiable cheque.

To return, however, to the consideration of the plebeian paths to matrimony before alluded to, we are reminded of the Registrar. Had our illustrative man been content to adopt this humble method of arriving at the holy estate, he would have found it burdened with the following conditions; a solemn declaration from him that no impediment existed to his intended marriage; that (should he desire to be married without license) he and his intended wife had resided for seven days within the district of the Registrar, or (if with license) that one of them had lived for fifteen days within the same district; that, should either of the parties be under age, proper consent to the marriage had been obtained; and all this in the presence of the Registrar, and under all the penalties (should any false statement be made) attached to perjury.

No person having objected to the Registrar issuing his certificate, our illustrative candidate for matrimony would have been furnished by that functionary with the important document, sooner or later, according to circumstances. If he were about to be married without license, he would have obtained it twenty-one days after he had given notice of his intention; if with license, it would have been granted to him at any time after one day had passed. Once furnished with this passport, his difficulties would have been at an end, and the marriage could be solemnised at any time, either according to the rites of the Church of England, or of the Jews, or of the Quakers.

Should it unfortunately happen that our friend's faith was not the faith of Churchman, Jew, or Quaker, the marriage would have to be solemnised in a licensed building in the presence of the Registrar, but with whatever ceremony Mr. Blank might choose to elect.

Always provided, however, that during the ceremony, whatever it might be, he and his intended wife should declare that they knew of no impediment to the marriage, and that he or she called upon the persons present to witness that he or she took the other party for her wedded husband or wife, as the case might be.

With this brief glance at a few of the more notable characteristics of marriage by license, by banns, by special license (a very brief glance indeed at this), and by the Registrar, let us endeavour to furnish our readers with an epitome of matrimonial law in general. In common with all other laws, it has been subject at times to gross abuse, and in no instance to greater abuse than in the case of the notorious Fleet marriages.

"Prior to the middle of the last century," says Mr. M'Queen in his treatise on Marriage and Divorce, "there was in the Fleet Prison a

colony of degraded ecclesiastics, who earned their livelihood by celebrating clandestine marriages for fees smaller than those legally taken in the parish church. Already," he continues, "incarcerated for debt or delinquencies, the reverend delinquents were beyond the reach of episcopal jurisdiction."

And a very thriving trade these reverend reprobates found it, as we may infer from the fact that six thousand couples were married by one of them in one year: whilst in the neighbouring parish church of St. Andrew's, Holborn, the legitimate parson married but fifty-three. We don't say much as to the morality of the proceeding, as witness the sad story (one out of a thousand) of Miss Ann Leigh:

"Miss Ann Leigh," the Weekly Journal for the 26th September, 1719, informed its readers, "an heiress of 200*l.* a year and 6000*l.* ready cash, hath been carried away from her friends in Buckinghamshire by Captain Pealy, a half-pay officer, and married at the Fleet against her consent, the authors of the plot having so used her that she now lieth speechless."

Happily the weekly journals of to-day are not called upon to record any such summary journeys to the hymeneal altar as that undertaken by the avaricious Captain Pealy, nor are the broad principles of the marriage law very difficult to understand. What these broad principles are may be stated shortly thus:

A marriage must be celebrated by a person in holy orders. It must take place (except in the case of special license) before twelve o'clock at noon. It must be solemnised (except as above mentioned) in a church or chapel consecrated for the purpose. The contracting parties (this is the way in which the law speaks of a bride and bridegroom) must not be related to each other in any degree prohibited by the table of consanguinity. They must be of age, or have obtained the consent of their parents or guardians. One of the parties must have resided for fourteen days in the parish where the marriage is celebrated.

The first and third of these principles do not apply to marriage by the Registrar.

Clear as these broad principles may appear, however, there are some points upon which the public will persist in going astray.

It is a popular error, for example (founded, we have little doubt, upon the dictum of Lord Stowell, "that a foreign marriage, valid according to the law of the place where celebrated, is good everywhere else"), to suppose that a marriage with a deceased wife's sister, celebrated abroad, will be recognised as legal in this country. This is not the case; and Sir C. Cresswell and Vice-Chancellor Stuart have already decided, in the case of *Brook v. Brook*, that the children of a marriage celebrated at Altona between an Englishman and his deceased wife's sister, were illegitimate. What is true of Altona is equally applicable to any part of the world.

The fact is, that Lord Stowell's rule applies only to the formalities of marriage, and merely intimates that the service which commences with

"Dearly beloved," and ends in "amazement," is not a *sine qua non* for tying English couples together, all over the world. If two persons between whom marriage is possible by English law, are married according to the rites and ceremonies of any foreign country which observes what is called the comity of nations with our tiny little island, then the marriage is perfectly valid. But, for all this, a man may not marry his grandmother during a continental tour with any hope of ever having the marriage recognised as legal in England. Nor can he, in any country in the world, effect such an alliance with his deceased wife's sister as shall legitimatise the offspring of the marriage.

Another popular fallacy is, that a marriage celebrated after twelve o'clock at noon is void. This is not the case: the marriage being good enough, though the clergyman who so officiates subjects himself to severe penalties for his infringement of the law.

That this error is not confined to the unlearned laity we may gather from the following anecdote, which we have heard from very good authority, and believe to be true:

A couple having appeared before the curate of a large metropolitan parish, for the purpose of being married, it was discovered that the bridegroom had forgotten the license. Posting off in hot haste to procure this important document, he was not able to reach the church on his return before the clock had chimed twelve. The curate, however, good-naturedly went on with the ceremony, and the happy couple were, as they fondly imagined, married. In the midst of the wedding breakfast, and shortly after the bride and bridegroom had taken their departure, the guests were startled by the abrupt appearance of the rector in whose parish the marriage had taken place. "No marriage, no marriage!" said that gentleman, to the consternation of the company, and demanded that the couple should be recaptured, and brought before him next morning, to go through the ceremony once more. This was done, to the satisfaction of the rector and the annoyance, we may suppose, of the rest of the party.

Now this worthy rector (he is at the present writing a member of the Episcopal Bench), had he been conversant with the law, might have saved both himself and others a great deal of annoyance. The parties were legally married in the first instance, but the unhappy curate had committed a felony, and might have been transported for fourteen years.

One additional word as to the age at which matrimony becomes a legal act, and we must leave any further condensation of the legal incidents of Mr. Blank's marriage for our next chapter.

It has been already mentioned that a young gentleman of fourteen can marry, and it only remains to say that a young lady of twelve is considered capable of consenting to be a bride. If the young lady be under sixteen, however, the husband may possibly be "wanted" for abduction; but, having paid the penalty

for this offence (merely transportation), he may, upon his return, claim his bride, and live happily all the rest of his life.

We say, claim his bride, advisedly; for, should there have been any false measures used in obtaining the license, or in the publication of banns, he will gain the lady only, and not her property. Happily, the Marriage Act is explicit upon this point, and lays it down that, when a valid marriage by license or banns is solemnised between persons either of whom is under age by means of the false oath or fraudulent procurement of one of the parties, the party offending shall be liable to forfeit all property which would otherwise accrue upon the marriage.

In fact, upon the whole, the law does not encourage the precocious marriages of boys and girls; and, the better to exhibit its feeling in this respect, it requires that no license shall be granted without the consent of the parents; and if after the publication of the banns the parents should object, it will prohibit the ceremony. If, however, any amorous youth should by any means (fair or foul) succeed in having his banns published without objection, or should once get his license safe into his own possession, it has been repeatedly held that a marriage celebrated under such circumstances must be considered good and valid.

AN UNHOLY BROTHERHOOD.

It is but to a limited number of Spaniards of the present day, that the existence, in any age, of the society we are about to describe is known. But, that it was rooted out, only in the latter years of Charles the Fourth's reign, is an indubitable fact in the secret history of Spain, and one in association with which the Inquisition performed, perhaps, its only praiseworthy act.

There is no record of the period at which the secret society of Despenadores was first instituted; but, from the name, it is to be inferred it was of some antiquity. For, though the Spanish language yet owns the verb active, *despenar* (not to be confounded with *despeñar*, which latter means the act of throwing from a rock or other elevation, precipitating), with the signification "to ease, to alleviate, to relieve from pain or care," it has long fallen into disuse, and may be looked upon as nearly obsolete.

On the evening of a certain day, in the year 1803, in a darkened and noiseless apartment in the town of Ocaña, in Old Castille, a worthy and respected citizen lay suffering under disease of long standing; at the tester of his bed, was fixed the customary pila, or little open earthenware vessel, containing holy water, surmounted by a painting of his patron saint; at the foot of the bed, a table of a small kind of altar bearing a couple of lighted tapers flanking a wooden effigy of Our Saviour extended on the cross, on which the sick man's eyes were riveted imploringly, gave unmistakable signs that the patient was considered in danger. He was yet but a middle-

aged man, unmarried, well to do in the world, of excellent character, and notable for his devout habits and rigid observance of all the forms and ceremonies of his church. His only relative was a sister, who, with two domestics, constituted his household; these had now withdrawn from the sick-chamber, to make way for his friend the parish priest—fortunately a plain, sensible, straight-minded man—who, at the patient's request, had been sent for to receive his confession, and to administer the last rites of absolution and extreme unction. And now that these ceremonies had been performed, the clergyman, who had long known and held the patient in much esteem, remained alone by his side, praying with and exhorting him. The sick man did not exactly fear to meet death, nor did he murmur at the decree of his Maker, yet he nevertheless exhibited extreme regret at being called from this world so soon. Therefore his friend, the priest, sought somewhat to cheer him, by observing, "that although in these acts he had complied with the duty of a good Christian in preparing himself for the worst, he bought by no means to despair of the possibility of the Divine mercy being even yet extended to him in this world, as there were numerous instances of persons recovering from a far more precarious state than he was yet in." This reawakened some hope in the patient's mind, and he seemed to gather strength and energy.

But, a slight noise in the room occasioning him suddenly to cast his eyes towards the door, the patient was seized with a convulsive tremor, his countenance betrayed signs of the most intense horror, and a cold sweat burst from him, as in an agonised whisper he said to the priest, "There is no hope, no escape, for me; now, indeed, my life is circumscribed to a few minutes, and it must terminate when you leave me; my death is now certainly and inevitably at hand." The good priest feared that a sudden delirium had seized the sick man, yet thought it well to argue with him, and inquire if any change in his sensations induced him to make so fatal a prognostic? No; he felt no increase in the symptoms of his disease; but he must die, he must die almost immediately. As he repeated this, often and coherently, and always in the same whispered tone, the priest insisted on being told the reason; and, at last, the patient, with great trembling and secrecy, pointed his attention to two persons who had entered and who stood in conversation at the farther end of the room, as though unwilling to intrude on his spiritual conference with his adviser. They were staid, sober, and respected men of that same town, wearing the sad-coloured garments that denoted their being *beatos*, or devotees, and they were acquainted both with the patient and the priest; they had come to inquire the state of their departing friend, and if it must be, to take their farewell of him. The sick man, with increased agitation, whispered, "They are of us. They are my companions. They are Despenadores. By their hands I shall die as soon as you quit me and they and I are alone." With

this, his thin hands seized and held the priest's arm with almost supernatural force.

What was the meaning of those words? What were Despenadores? Why should his fate depend upon them? These were questions the priest was quite unable to solve; but he determined, as far as possible, to tranquillise the poor wretch by assuring him that he would not leave his side until desired by himself to do so. This in some measure relieved the sick man's fright. There the priest sat for hours, during which the two visitors more than once drew near the bedside, inquiring of the patient (who shuddered afresh at each approach) the state of his body and mind, considerably observing that the Señor Parroco must be wearied by his long attendance, and offering to relieve him in waiting upon and praying by the dying man. But the priest, warned by the clutch of his friend's hand, declined to accept their proposal, and, finally, finding no pretext for a longer stay at that time, they had to withdraw.

Perceiving that there was a mystery he could not for the present trace, and that the conflict of terror and hope rendered the patient for the time incapable of clearing it up, the clergyman resolved on staying by him until his latest hour, should his disorder finally take a fatal turn; and he gave strict injunctions that no one whatsoever but the medical attendants should be admitted into the sick-room: his clerical presence being a sufficient excuse to any others who might seek entrance. On the succeeding day he was gratified by learning that the crisis of the disorder had passed, and that the patient's condition was much more hopeful. As soon as he found him sufficiently tranquil and reassured to revert to the mysterious subject, the priest urged him to disclose everything relating to his strange hints of the preceding night. Ultimately he drew from him, though with much difficulty, this acknowledgment: That there existed a secret Brotherhood of which he was a member, not numerous, but widely, disseminated throughout Spain, who were sworn to seek every opportunity of gaining access to such persons as, being in articulo mortis, had received the last sacraments and rites of their religion, and, under pretext of praying with and giving them spiritual consolation, to seize the first moment of being alone with them to terminate their remaining hours—by strangulation, by smothering with a pillow, or in any other way not calculated to awaken suspicion: That this association was guided by a much higher object than the merely charitable one which their adopted name of Despenadores would indicate; for, instead of merely intending to abbreviate the death agony of the sufferer, their object was to prevent all possibility of his escaping death by an unlooked-for recovery, as would sometimes happen: That the Despenadores knew that, after having received plenary absolution and the other final rites of the Church, the sick were in a state of beatitude, and certain of admission to heaven; while, should they

be restored to health, they would be again exposed to all the snares and temptations of this wicked world, which, according to the weakness of nature, would lead them to sin anew and unavoidably imperil their souls should they afterwards be cut off by accidental sudden decease: That the Brotherhood, therefore, sought the eternal welfare of the absolved, and insured them a certain entrance into Paradise.

Avowing that he had personally taken part in these acts on more than one occasion, the patient was sternly asked by the priest why they had never been referred to in his frequent confessions to him? He answered, that it was not incumbent on him or on any of his companions to name them, for, so far from being sins, they were meritorious actions, inasmuch as they rendered certain the salvation of souls that might otherwise perish; but apparently, he trusted so fully in his own strength and virtue, that he was disinclined to have this positive security accorded to himself.

The poor priest was shocked and puzzled by the revelation, for he could not easily decide whether he ought or ought not to regard it as made under the seal of confession, and consequently of inviolable secrecy; but, after some consideration, he judged it his duty to lay the whole matter privately before his diocesan, the Archbishop of Toledo. That prelate being one of the grand inquisitors, found sufficient reason in it for having the three individuals whom the clergyman pointed out as Despenadores, lodged in the cells of the Holy Office. On being examined, they exhibited neither fear nor compunction at owning themselves members of that secret but, as they contended, most praiseworthy association; or, in naming such others of the fraternity as they knew.

How to act towards the fanatics implicated in this most horrible league, who were within a short time all arrested, became a matter of perplexity as well to the Inquisition as to the Council of Castille (which, as civil crime had been committed in the formation of a secret society, had also to take part in it), for it was desirable to avoid, as far as possible, giving publicity to the facts, lest an indignant spirit of revenge should be roused among survivors who conceived that their deceased relatives had been murdered. The question of culpability was, therefore, in many instances put hypothetically for consideration of the most eminent jurists in Spain, as well of common as of canon law, and the majority of their conclusions was, that crime had been committed, not with a wilfully guilty intent, but from a deplorably misguided and fanatical belief. The punishment was consequently limited to such different terms of confinement as were considered necessary to indoctrinate the culprits in a proper manner, and when they were released it was under the assurance that the utmost severity of the law would be put in force against them in the event of relapse. The higher ecclesiastical and civil authorities were commanded to keep a most vigilant watch,

and from that time the association was virtually extinguished, whatever became of the individual feelings of its members.

How many victims may have been sacrificed to this spirit of inhuman and revolting fanaticism, no human being can ever know, and the day of judgment alone can reveal.

COMMITTED TO NEWGATE-STREET.

It may have been a prophetic vision of the future, it may have been only the phantom of a disordered digestion, but I saw it as plainly as anything was ever seen by human eyes.

I saw the architectural masterpiece of Wren, the national Cathedral of St. Paul's, as black and as majestic as ever, up in the clouds. I say in the clouds, for the solemn glory had departed from its base. It was no longer a mysterious temple standing in a sacred circle, undefiled by contact with the coarse trades carried on within the broad shadow of its dome. The greasy, suety labourers of Newgate-market, and the dead meat—the daily staple food supply of metropolitan millions—had at last oozed out of their narrow receptacles in this direction. The thin, lean channel of Paternoster-row—the ground that is traditionally haunted by the bony authors of the past—had been too weak and feeble, to stem that sturdy torrent, which refused to be confined any longer by any barriers, until it found a resting-place round the statue of Queen Anne in the open cathedral yard. The heavy quarters of Aberdeen beef, the pink and yellow quarters of Edinburgh mutton, the bullocks' hearts, the ox-tails, the baskets of small joints, the carcases sewn up in dark canvas bags, the smooth-skinned pigs, were all piled up on the very steps of the temple, in defiance of everything, except the one necessity for finding room. The blue-shirted guardians of these treasures, the salesmen's men and the market porters, looked hot, determined, sulky, and riotous, like persons who had made up their minds to be trifled with no more. The former ran their red fingers through their greasy hair, flourished their long greasy knives, and seemed to speak of the great space underneath the cathedral dome, as if they were about to turn it, by force, into a market for dead meat. The Dean and Chapter were fortunately not awake to hear these seditious threats. The Common Council had debated for years, the City-architect had reported for years, the City solicitor had drawn and reported for years, and, in the mean time, the metropolitan population had grown, had doubled, and the food supply had doubled likewise. Thousands of market-carts formed an endless chain along Newgate-street, the Old Bailey, Ludgate-hill, and the sacred churchyard. Thousands of tons of meat poured relentlessly from loaded waggons in Warwick-lane, White Hart-street, the market proper, and Newgate-street, squeezing through the narrow courts and alleys to the cathedral columns. Thousands of butchers hustled and bargained with hundreds of sales-

men, while hundreds of porters trotted by with mighty limbs of meat upon their backs, or with half a dozen knotted sheep quarters disposed about their bodies. In such a storm the voice of authority was hushed, the truncheon of authority was placed upon the shelf, and rum and milk were liberally combined to console the abdicated beadle and the abdicated policeman.

I awoke, as all dreamers do. I discovered that my watch had reached the hour of three A.M., while I recollected that I had appointed the hour of four A.M. to inspect, in reality, the market I had been visiting in my sleep. I am not in the habit of getting up at three; I am not in the habit of visiting Newgate-market. The sense of some strange, unusual duty had produced a short and restless night, in which the coming events had cast their exaggerated shadows before.

Not so very exaggerated, either, as I found, when the market delirium was at its height. At four o'clock in the morning there was comparative tranquillity, and partial darkness. It was Saturday, and a December morning. The hundred and fifty salesmen, with their six or seven hundred men, had not all arrived to open their shallow shops in the narrow Newgate-street lanes, and to welcome the arrival of two thousand purchasers. But the six hundred tons of dead meat had already begun to arrive from the different railways in heavy vans, and signs of these deliveries might have been seen as early as one o'clock in the morning. Where the shops were not open, the heavy baskets of mutton were thrown down on the pavement before the dark doorways, as the first rule for the carters to observe is to get rid of their load and to get out of the way. By five A.M. the whole of the courts, alleys, shops, spaces, cupboards, and watchbox-looking counting-houses were lighted up; the arrivals of meat became more frequent, and the struggle to deliver more desperate; the thousand and one carts of the different metropolitan butchers took their places in a slanting position along the kerb of Newgate-street, round the black prison, in Paternoster-row, and Ave Maria-lane, up Ludgate-hill, and round the churchyard; and the business of the market might be considered as fairly opened, as there is any prospect of its ever being in this world, while it remains where it is.

This business is tolerably simple in principle, and consists chiefly of selling consignments of dead meat, upon commission. There are a few carcase butchers—men who kill their own meat, and sell it—but not more than a dozen; there are eight or ten licensed slaughter-house keepers, with slaughter-houses not underground, as in the olden time; and there are a few small salesmen, who join to a small commission trade, the purchasing and retailing of meat on their own account. These are the exceptions in Newgate-market, to whom may be added the poultry-dealers, who carry on their occupation in a small feathered space, not unlike a "Lady-chapel" in a cathedral. The meat is sold by the stone of eight pounds: a peculiar arbitrary weight, in use only in dead and live meat markets. The salesman is paid by a fixed com-

mission on each sheep, pig, or bullock disposed of, and not by a per-centage upon the price obtained.

The dead meat consigned to Newgate-market for sale, consists entirely of the hind, or best parts of the animals; the fore parts being disposed of in the country—where the killing takes place—or in London, to provision merchants—by a separate operation—who use it for salting and making preserves. The bulk of the mutton comes from Edinburgh, in baskets containing ten hind parts of sheep apiece; the bulk of the beef is sent up from Aberdeen in huge quarters, protected by coarse canvas bags. As a curious instance of the unequal effect of railway competition, it may be mentioned that the charge for carriage per ton is greater from Bedford than from this remote northern city of Aberdeen. The difference in the quantities of consignments may have something to do with it, but there stands the bare fact.

When the meat has been tugged and forced out of its railway waggon, in the small, crowded, noisy market-place, or the narrow, crowded, noisy street, it is seized by porters and salesmen's men, and conveyed to its proper destination. The quarters of beef, looking like mattresses in their canvas coverings, are hoisted upon greasy backs, while the baskets of sheep are planted on small porters' barrows, and wheeled desperately in amongst the higgling, busy crowd. A ceaseless procession of this character is doomed to struggle for hours through the narrow groves of fat meat, always meeting another similar procession, whose destiny it is to struggle in the same manner, on the same precious ground, but in an exactly opposite direction. Proprietors of shops are pushed, nose foremost, against their meat; hats are knocked off by the hard, sharp feet of pigs; the dissection of beef flanks is discontinued for a time, and the long knife is dropped dexterously into a gaping pocket or pouch, that an unlucky stab may not be given in the wrong place; the dandy white coats of butcher swells (for there are taste and aristocracy even here) are larded well by huge suety bullock-quarters from which there is no escape; the back-porter shouts to you to take care of your head, and the barrow-porter requests you to mind your back; the badgered carter exclaims "I know!" immediately after he has tilted over half a ton of raw provisions within an inch of your feet; horses and carts are backed helplessly into blind alleys and squares, from which there seems no possible prospect of escape, and the one thing agreeable in all this cramped and confined labour is the general good-humour and patience of the men. When the meat has struggled up to the shop of its appointed salesman, the baskets are rapidly opened, the canvas coverings are rapidly cut off, and a little greasy ticket is searched for amongst the straw, or inside the bag, which is the sole record of the name of the sender and the weight of the meat. Sometimes, these tickets, when the consigners are very careful, are found

skewered into the body of each animal; sometimes, they are lost altogether, or, when found, are illegible from grease and bad writing; sometimes, the basket, when opened, is full of small joints of mutton and veal, each one of which belongs to a separate proprietor. These records are transferred to the small watchbox counting-houses, while the meat is quickly hung up on large hooks, in and outside the shops, for the immediate inspection of the numerous passing buyers. Every inch of space is made available in these shops; they are scooped out, so to speak; the encroachment of a water-pipe is grudged; and staircases, in some instances, are swept away, to have their places supplied by upright ladders nailed against the wall. The meat is hardly hoisted to the hooks, and the men have hardly had time to display their critical admiration of a quarter which possesses many points of beauty and excellence, when an early, decisive, or important buyer marches round the shop with a handful of skewers, pinches the sheep, lifts up the beef to examine the quality at the end, and finally, by sticking a skewer in each animal, marks a score of favoured quarters as his own. The walls are quickly stripped again, the meat is weighed and charged to the buyer, and a struggle, similar to that which succeeded in landing it in the salesman's shop, has to be immediately gone through to land it in the butchers' market carts. These carts may be in the Old Bailey, in Newgate-street, or Paternoster-row, according to their luck in securing a place, and thither the procession of meat porters has to wind and fight. Legs of pork are bumped against huge pieces of veal; bullocks' hearts and ox-tails are swung jauntily into butcher-boys' hands, while quarters of beef press onward, and send the weaker sheep to the wall, by reason of their superior momentum and weight. As they struggle out of the market, they meet another incoming procession of later deliveries, and the two solid streams pass each other as best they can. This kind of scene goes on every morning, for several hours, from four o'clock, perhaps, until ten A.M.: the most trying mornings being Saturday and Monday. Contractors, eating-house keepers, poulterers, and boys who sell meat-hooks, hatchets, knives, &c., mix with the crowd of butchers and salesmen; other boys worm their way about, with early copies of the morning papers; and little girls endeavour to convey to hungry shopmen large mugs of hot coffee and thick slices of bread and cold pork. Old public-houses which skulk in out-of-the-way corners, light up the lemons and rum phials in their dingy windows, and proceed to brew the favourite market beverage, rum and milk. Old coffee-houses, with signs appropriate to their position, which you saw, as plainly as possible, an hour before, are now hidden, up to their second floors, with hanging quarters of beef and mutton, and you grope for a door under a portico of headless sheep. Dwelling-houses look quietly down upon this whirlpool of raw food, and the dull, yellow-

white blinds of their windows can be seen through the morning mist, and above the flare of the market gas. They must be wonderful people who can sleep in such bed-chambers.

It is not, perhaps, easy to overrate the social importance of this dead meat market in Newgate-street. After allowing for the metropolitan live cattle market at Holloway, we may safely say—although the statistics are extremely loose—that the duty of providing one-half of the daily staple food of three millions of people is thrown upon the meat salesmen in these Newgate-street courts and alleys. We may not only assert that our present dead meat market is painfully wanting in space, but that it contributes, in some degree, by the difficulties it throws in the way of the butcher's trade, to raise the price of animal food all over London. The fact would be ridiculous, but for its having a serious aspect, that six hundred tons of meat, on any given Saturday morning, should be squeezed, pushed, and thrown, by some three thousand people, into a web of narrow alleys, like the maze at Hampton Court, to be torn and dragged out of the same maze by the same three thousand people immediately afterwards. To look at one of these alleys, when business is at its height, you might suppose that the houses had been slightly split asunder by solid wedges of meat.

The market proper, which belongs to the corporation, is an open, uncovered space, about twenty-five yards long by twenty yards broad. It can be reached by a few foot passages, but only by one carriage-way, about three yards wide, called White Hart-street, that will admit one cart at a time out of Warwick-lane. Almost every van that comes down this narrow roadway has to be conducted by the market beadle to its place, and planted with much ingenuity, so that it may be able to withdraw when its unloading work is done. Nearly every Stoke Pogis in the country has a better market-place; while Liverpool can show a range of buildings for selling every article of human food, much superior to what our chief metropolitan receptacles for fish, flesh, vegetables, and fowls would make, if they were all brought together. The different webs of this maze, the narrow alleys, the shops that have burst out between Newgate-street—taverns, drapers, and Berlin wool warehouses—the meat receptacles in Warwick-lane and Ivy-lane, are all private property, rented by meat salesmen, whose business could not be conducted any longer in the sheds of the market proper.

The old College of Physicians in Warwick-lane, built in 1670, from a design by Sir Christopher Wren, has been partially swallowed up by the butchers, in their irresistible demand for room. Looking at the octangular porch of entrance, under the "pill"-surmounted dome (according to the author of the Dispensary), and along the passages, which look like naves and transepts, to find them lighted up,

hung with all kinds of meat, and crowded with meat buyers and meat sellers, it requires no very great stretch of faith or imagination to believe that St. Paul's Cathedral may one day fall a victim in like manner to market necessities, as it appeared in my dream. There was a time when no eminent physician could have thought, for a moment, that his cherished college would ever be so desecrated; and so, no doubt, at the present hour, think the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, of their sacred temple. It is not wise to be over-confident in your security. Those who have any lingering regard for the old market-place of literature—Paternoster-row—and those who respect the sanctity of the national cathedral, either from an architectural, theological, or ecclesiastical point of view, will do well in endeavouring to turn the ever-swelling tide of dead meat in an opposite direction, and in supporting the projectors who wish to transform Smithfield into a great central market for flesh, fish, and fowl. The maddening traffic of the City streets, shows another necessity for some such improvement; while the contemplated centralisation of the metropolitan railways, ought to afford increased facilities for the more rapid and decent collection and distribution of food.

What the proposed and accepted design for covering in Smithfield may be, I suppose we shall all learn in good (corporation) time. To those who have looked forward to the costly Utopia of a City park, it may prove, in any shape, disgusting in the extreme; but lawns and fountains, however beautiful, must not stand in the way of hungry millions demanding to be fed. A market-place need not be an unpicturesque object, as our neighbours, the French people, taught us long ago. The meat salesmen will, doubtless, be in favour of warehouses over their market, with a view of keeping down their rents: while the proprietors of property in the neighbourhood, and certain sanitary authorities, will advocate a light, airy structure, well ventilated at top. Whatever it is to be, in the name of the present market maze, let it be erected quickly, cheaply, and well! Let us feel, when we go to bed, that our dinners are no longer being sent to crowded Newgate-street to take their bitter trial; and that our national cathedral is preserved from dead meat desecration for at least two centuries to come!

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